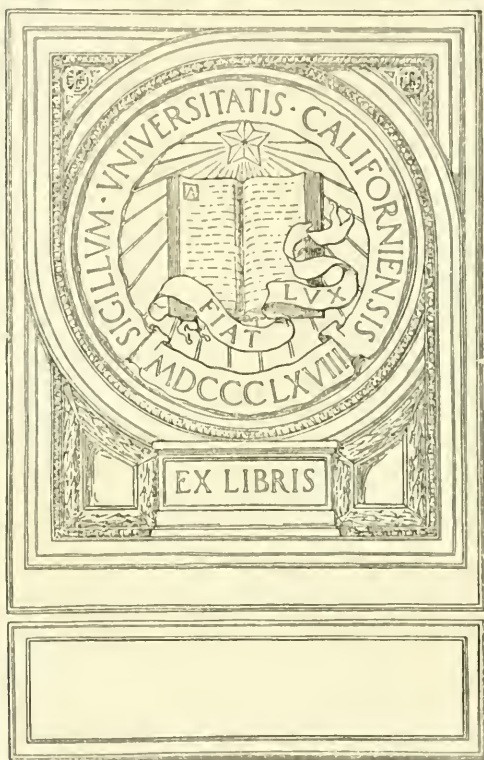




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Lady Guziana Fortington

THE GAMBLER'S WIFE.

A NOVEL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE YOUNG PRIMA DONNA," "THE BELLE OF THE
FAMILY," "THE OLD DOWER HOUSE," &c.

"A man in all the world's new fashion planted,
That hath a mint of phrases in his brain—
One, whom the music of his own vain tongue
Doth ravish—like enchanting harmony—
A man of compliments-----"

LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL III.

LONDON:

T. C. NEWBY, 72, MORTIMER ST., CAVENDISH SQ.

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THE GAMBLER'S WIFE.

CHAPTER I.

" T'was a friend of my early youth
That I met in a foreign land.

He spoke, t'was a voice from my home I heard,
And it struck my heart's most sensitive chord."

HAYNES BAYLEY.

" Upon her face there was a tint of grief,
A settled shadow of an inward strife,
And an unquiet drooping of the eye,
As if its lid was charged with unshed tears—
What could her grief be ? for she had all she loved,
And HE who had so loved her was not there ;
To trouble with bad hopes or evil wish,
Or ill repressed affection—her pure thoughts—
What could her grief be ?"

BYRON.

A YEAR and a half has passed away since we
parted with our friends at Langdale. It is in

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a drawing-room in Arlington-Street, that we again recognise two of the party. May Sutherland and Lord Percival, who now unforbidden, unchecked, is pouring upon her ear the full story of his long-felt, constant love. The patient, persevering lover is rewarded—for the fair girl whom he so long loved, has at last calmly and willingly consented that at some future time she would be his wife.

But had he not waited long enough already? was another seven years, to be added to the years of his bondage? for thus he styled and likened the time of his anxious uncertainty. Alas! then indeed her feelings were not like his, or she could not so calmly talk of “time.” Still May relented not; no, she spoke again and not only of time, but of absence. Though her knowledge of his excellence, had won her esteem nay! her love, as yet she loved her father better. Mr. Sutherland was soon to return to the Manor; he was determined to yield no longer to the weakness which had

hitherto kept him from his home, and to devote herself solely to this dear father, to give herself up, heart and soul, to his support and comfort during this severe trial, she felt was her duty, as well as her firm desire.

“And how can that be done?” she added with her own sweet smile, “if you are ever by my side with your *exigeant* claims on my attention?”

A sudden cloud seemed to dim the bright gladness which had shone on Lord Percival's face, and it seemed as if some painful remembrance had rushed back to his mind; for an instant he was silent, but the next, he raised his eyes to her face, and with an expression of recovered cheerfulness on his countenance, said in his frank, open manner—

“You will not I am sure now refuse to answer me the same question, which, in my despair, I once presumed to ask you. Will you assure me without hesitation, sincerely and truthfully, that your father alone is the cause of your present cruelty?”

He saw May's fair cheeks suffused with a bright glow, though there was a smile on her lips, as casting down her eyes, she remained in thought. He was somewhat startled, and suddenly a fearful suggestion burst upon his senses, which as quickly filled him with horror and self-reproach, for allowing an idea so base, an entrance into his mind. But her sister—he thought, did *she* not betray the love, the confidence of her affianced husband? With a voice tremulous with emotion he said, “May—between us, I am sure you will agree, it were best that there should be no more concealments.”

“I do indeed Lord Percival,” she replied in a firm voice, “and especially is it necessary,” and gentle reproof mingled in her tone, “when I see that all the love you profess does not inspire perfect confidence. No!” she continued, smiling and blushing as he strove to interrupt her, “I am aware you are thinking of my strange confusion at Langdale, when you so

abruptly asked me if my affections were disengaged. Painful as it must be, I will now confess to you that at that time they were *not*!”

And she turned away her face.

“And my rival, my own sweet May—you will complete your confidence—your beautiful ingenuousness; grateful indeed do I feel, but still——.”

“Nay!” answered the fair girl, still averting her eyes, “you might surely spare me farther — for who — who” she added in her artless manner, “who could it have been——”

Lord Percival pressed her hand to his lips and bade her say no more.

But she disobeyed him; gaining courage as she proceeded; frankly and fully, she related the events of her young heart's early history.

“And now Lord Percival” she added archly in conclusion, “now that I have paid *my* penalty, let me tell you that you must prepare for *yours*. You deserve punishment, both for the suspicion, which I well know crossed your mind,

and also for your boldness in questioning me in the manner you have done. You had not a legitimate right so to do. I believe it is not the custom for the lovers of the present day, to dive into the past memoirs of the heart of their lady-loves. I shall however be more lenient in my sentence than you deserve — so no repinings — no expostulations ! obey my orders, and then——I promise you, with my father's sanction, all shall be arranged."

" And where shall my place of banishment be ?" said Lord Percival, with sorrowful resignation, after his sentence had been passed in due form, " if it must be so, do you name it ; give me some mission, some object, and if it be to the deserts of Siberia, your having ordered it will render the task endurable."

" Well, I will not send you there," said May laughing ; " however" she added in an altered, sadder tone, " you have it indeed in your power to oblige and serve me essentially. Go

to Germany and see my poor, dear sister and her child."

And to Germany Lord Percival departed soon after the foregoing conversation.

* * * * *

It was at a gay entertainment at Baden, that Lord Percival again beheld the bright being, who, had she not been the sister of his much loved May, would have been regarded with coldness and dislike—for with her image was associated the misery and desolation which had clouded the opening prospects of his dearest friend; but now his feelings towards her had softened, and he could only think of the perjured Maud, as the sister of his betrothed.

"Dazzlingly beautiful!" was his inward exclamation when he first caught sight of her, as she stood surrounded by a group of admirers, for at that moment the bright smile

of yore was on her lip, and light brilliantly flashing from her lustrous eyes.

“Poor Arthur,” he thought, “it is well you see her not !” He looked again—the smile was gone, and was replaced by a look of painful care—the eyes were still bright, more so even than before, but their expression was changed to one of restless excitement, as seemingly forgetful of those around her, she suffered them to wander anxiously over the assembled throng. “Fearfully beautiful !” now rose to Percival’s lips, and he thought of the calm countenance of his gentle May, and pictured to himself, how it would be the study of his whole life, to ward off every approach of sorrow, or disquiet, which might trouble the expression of that placid face. “And this, Arthur Balfour would have done for you, false, treacherous beauty !” he soliloquised. With an effort over his feelings which were not of a very softened nature towards our heroine, Lord Percival shortly after made his way

through the crowd, and approached the spot where Maud was seated. Her eyes met his—he bowed—then seeing a half uncertain expression on her countenance, he advanced and said—

“ You have not I hope quite forgotten me, Mrs. Percy—a friend from England.”

“ Lord Percival !” she exclaimed with emotion, as she extended to him both her hands—Her lips quivered—her bosom heaved, and large, glistening drops dimmed her eyes—she paused for a moment, and averted her head—then, brushing the tears away and endeavouring to appear composed, she turned towards him again.

“ Let me offer you my arm,” said Lord Percival in kind accents, “ we shall be able to converse more quietly in the cool ante-room,” and he led her through the crowded ball-room to the spot he named, whilst with an eager, yet timid, voice she enquired whether he had lately seen her father and sister.

There was something so joyous and significant in his tone as he replied, and in the conscious smile that accompanied his words, that it appeared to awaken ideas in the mind of his anxious listener, for she suddenly looked up enquiringly in his face, and begged him to tell her all he knew of her darling sister ; and Percival too happy by far, to wish to retain his glad secret, soon revealed the whole story, and claimed the congratulations of his future sister on his bright prospects. They were courteously given, but not with the unmixed cordiality he might have expected.

It was in a tone of trembling emotion, that Maud next spoke of her father, and when Lord Percival began, in a guarded and gentle manner, to mention the continued oppression of his spirits, and his having at length returned to the Manor, in a hurried agitated manner she stopped him, saying—

“ You shall tell me all about that another time—not now.” And her voice trembled, and

tears again gathered in her eyes; and then she continued, with an effort to be cheerful, "You must come and see me sometimes, whilst you are here, and give me every particular; they will indeed be welcome, for alas!" and there was a slight burst of wounded feeling in her tone, "my accounts from England of late have been truly 'few, and far between,'" and with these last words in spite of all her efforts to restrain them, the pent up tears gushed forth.

Lord Percival was deeply touched at the sight of the emotion shewn by one whom he had hitherto ever regarded as a mere selfish, unfeeling beauty. It was strange he thought, that she should have found a heart in the world to which she now belonged, and as she apologised for her weakness, he kindly entreated her not to treat him as a stranger, but as a brother who could understand, and appreciate the feelings called forth, by the remembrance of "far-off friends."

"Especially with such beautiful music

sounding in our ears," he added, "so plaintive in its melody, just calculated to affect the nerves and particularly in a scene like this before us;" and he glanced from the recess in which they sat, partly concealed by orange trees surrounding the spot, to the brilliant *Salle de Balle*," which, with its multitude of mirrors, lights, and flowers and the gay circle of waltzers, looked like a dazzling scene of enchantment, affording a painful contrast to the sorrowful. "Is Mr. Percy here?" Lord Percival next enquired.

"Yes," she answered hurriedly, glancing towards an opposite door, the color mounting to her cheeks, "I dare say he will join us presently — he will be delighted to see you."

Percival bowed politely, but coldly.

"How long do you mean to remain at Baden? not any very great length of time I suppose," said Maud with a significant smile.

Lord Percival shook his head.

“For six months I am banished by your cruel sister, and I shall probably remain here some portion of the time.”

What ! has gentle May become a tyrant ?” exclaimed Maud, “and then,” she added in a low, timid tone, “Did they know that you would see me ?”

Lord Percival related the fact of May’s having dispatched him to Germany, for the sole purpose of bringing her intelligence of her sister and child.

Poor Maud’s eyes again glistened, but now it was with tears of pleasure.

“Dear, sweet May !” she exclaimed, and then a glow of maternal pride lighted up her face, “I wish indeed she could see my boy—but, Lord Percival, you shall see him, and tell her what a darling he is ;” and with eager animation she proceeded to descant on all her child’s perfections, encouraged by the good-natured interest betrayed by her listener, to gratify the young mother’s heart.

And thus they sat for some time in their chosen retreat, whilst many a cavalier of the gay throng who caught a glimpse of the pair as they passed to fro from the *salle de balle* to the *salle de jeu*, which the ante-room divided from each other, cast a glance at the fortunate individual, who had found so much favour in the eyes of the usually inaccessible beauty, as to induce her to unbend from her hauteur, and dignity, to vouchsafe, a decided flirtation, with so gay and handsome a stranger.

At length a well-known voice fell upon Lord Percival's ear, and the sound seemed to recal Maud's attention to things around her. Her cheeks flushed and she turned her eyes quickly and anxiously whence it came.

"That is Mr. Percy," she said rising, "shall we go and meet him?"

Issuing from the *salle de jeu* Harry Percy slowly approached. Hanging on his arm was a lady who though she had passed *la premiere jeunesse* and not strictly beautiful, was striking

in appearance from her elaborate dress, and lively, *piquante* countenance. Her face beamed with gaiety and animation, as laughing and talking, she turned it towards her companion who with his—

“ Graceful smile and whisper bland.”

was bending down to her.

They were passing on when Maud stepping forward pronounced his name, which caused him to pause, and the lady to bestow one of her softest smiles, and liveliest greetings, on our heroine, who in return merely bowed her head, civilly, but with coldness, and then said, looking at her husband—

“ Harry, here is an old friend from England ; Lord Percival !”

A momentary shade of something like embarrassment, passed over Harry Percy's face, at finding himself so suddenly brought in contact, with the intimate friend of the man he had so deeply wronged, particularly as he perceived by the frigid civility with which Lord

Percival greeted him, that the wrong was by no means forgotten by him.

But Percy in a moment had regained his self-possession, and was pronouncing with his usual warmth of manner, the pleasure he felt at meeting him; and then, changing his voice to a more subdued tone, made anxious enquiries for his friends in England.

“And how do you think my wife is looking?” he at length exclaimed turning round to Maud, who stood beside them, with an affectionate smile, “none the worse for the continent I hope—but I see she is longing to get rid of me to have some more chat with you, so I’ll be off. I have promised the countess to waltz with her—a monstrous bore!” he added lowering his voice and looking towards the lady, who had been drawn to some short distance, and stood in the midst of a crowd of admirers; “I wish you would persuade Mrs. Percy to waltz—but she’s grown very lazy.

“ Dear Harry, I think I shall go home now,” said Maud as she saw him about to depart, “ I am rather tired,” and Percival saw her raise her eyes, and fix them with an earnest, beseeching glance on her husband’s face.

Whatever might have been its meaning, it caused Percy to pause; and in an affectionate tone to say—

“ Well love as you please; I suppose the carriage is here,” and Maud accepting Lord Percival’s offer to precede them, to see if it were in readiness, placed her arm within that of her husband, and thus they descended the stairs.

They stood together in the cloak-room, when Lord Percival again joined them, and on his entrance he caught the words “ Nonsense darling !” spoken by Harry Percy, who then hurried his wife into the carriage.

Lord Percival put his head in at the window for a moment, to wish her good night.

“ I shall certainly pay your son a visit to-morrow morning,” he said, but as he spoke, he beheld by the light of the lamp, tears in her eyes ; and her cheeks were so pale, that he almost started as he drew back to allow, as he expected, her husband to enter the carriage, but he had disappeared.

Yes, and when Percival returned to the ball-room, there was Harry Percy dancing and flirting as he used to do in his bachelor days, perhaps even with more apparent zest, though these occupations seemed to be but a relaxation from still more exciting pursuits ; for on strolling afterwards with a friend whom he had encountered at Baden, into the *salle de jeu*, there again he found him. And who was the fair lady who seemed to monopolise so much of his attention ? She was the wife of a foreign Israelite of immense wealth—wealth sufficient to maintain, in splendour, a wife whose gambling propensities would speedily have ruined any man of moderate revenue.

Lord Percival received this information from his friend and he asked no more questions, he had heard and seen enough to make him suspect, that broken faith had already met its reward.

But it had been her own work—a gambler's wife she had chosen to be, and as such she must reap the almost inevitable fate—still his heart bled for May's sister.

CHAPTER II.

“ I saw thee in thy beauty
With one hand among her curls,
The other with no gentle grasp
Had seized a string of pearls;
She felt the pretty trespass,
And she chid thee though she smiled,
And I knew not which was lovelier
The mother or the child.”

“ Although the print be little, the whole matter
And copy of his father ; eye, nose, lip,
The trick of his frown, his forehead ; nay the valley,
The pretty dimples of his chin, and cheek ; his
Smile—”

WINTER'S TALE.

THE next morning Lord Percival proceeded
to the private lodgings occupied by the Percys.

Maud was alone looking even more lovely in her simple morning attire, than in her *recherché* toilette of the preceding evening, although by the light of day, he perceived that she was thinner and her colour less brilliant.

Percival, in former days, used to think that there was almost too much brightness in her beauty—too much glare, he was wont to express it, in her brilliant eyes, and complexion, and something almost too dazzling, in the whiteness of her teeth—but now that a shadow had, as it seemed, been cast over her beauty's lustre, though it were even that dark hue of sorrow, which had never before dimmed its brightness—yet the subduing effect, he thought, had rendered her loveliness quite perfect, and he marvelled that such a peerless creature, had failed to draw even a dissipated husband, from the unhallowed paths in which he trod.

Maud was at the piano when Percival entered, and as he ascended the stairs, he re-

cognised the beautiful voice he so well remembered at Sutherland Manor.

But though the voice was the same, the tones were altered—there was a mournful sound in their intonation. They seemed to tell the tale !

“ Thou hast wept---and thou hast parted---
Thou hast been forsaken long---
Thou hast watched for steps that came not back,
I know it by thy song.”

Percival asked if she sang as much as ever, and she answered with a sigh—

“ Not quite — Mr. Percy is very fond of a song now and then, to my guitar—but he is not very musical—therefore ——”

She paused and the colour mounted to her temples. Lord Percival thought to himself—

“ She is thinking of one perhaps who *was* musical.”

He felt curious to know, what effect the mention of Arthur Balfour's name would pro-

duce, and in order to lead to the subject he continued by saying—

“And I am not musical either, I am sorry to say—”

“Does May keep up her singing?” asked Maud hurriedly.

“She is always very good about it,” he replied, “and never refuses when I petition for a song—but I do not think your father cares much for music now.”

Maud slightly bent her head to hide a tear that started to her eyes.

“How he loved it once!” she thought.

“And Balfour,” continued Percival, “has been so little with them lately, that like you, I suppose for want of encouragement, May has rather relaxed in her diligence, though when I possess a little more authority over her, I shall make her turn over a new leaf.”

There was a slight pause and then Maud again lifted up her eyes to his face.

“ Arthur is quite well I hope,” she said in a calm low voice.

“ Quite well,” replied Percival; “ he is now with his regiment in Ireland. Mr. Sutherland hopes to have him again with him in the winter ;—but he is such a good soldier, and so wedded to his profession, that he does not like to absent himself for any time from his duties.”

And there the subject dropped, for Maud, as he spoke, became so pale that he felt anxious to turn from a conversation which called up such painful emotion, and the color soon returned to her cheek, and a look of brighter joy shone in her eyes than he had yet seen, for the voice of a young child was heard on the stairs, and exclaiming, “ Oh, there is my little bird singing,” she sprang to the door, and returned bearing in her arms, a creature lovely as the imagination could have pictured the child of Maud Percy and there was

the bright complexion—the golden hair of her childhood, although the countenance and features were not hers, but the miniature likeness of his handsome father.

The beautiful boy received sufficient admiration from Percival, to satisfy even a young mother's tenacious pride and tenderness, and she smiled an arch smile at the caress he lavished upon the babe, after remarking his wonderful likeness to his aunt May. For a time Lord Percival could have fancied himself in the presence of the joyous, light-hearted Maud Sutherland, so merry was her laugh as she sported with her little Harry.

Voices at length were heard approaching, and Mr. Percy, accompanied by some other gentlemen, entered the room.

“Oh you here, little rogue!” exclaimed Harry Percy; and after having cordially greeted Lord Percival, he lifted up the child, who on his entrance, had stretched out his arms calling “Papa papa!” and caressed him tenderly whilst

Maud's restless eyes might have been seen watching his every look and movement with eager pleasure, even whilst she gave that attention to her visitors that courtesy enjoined.

Her guests however seemed pretty well to know the most effectual means of winning a smile from their lovely hostess, for none failed to notice and admire her child, or loudly to applaud the little feats of Percy's own teaching, which he amused himself by making his intelligent boy exhibit.

"I never saw so striking a likeness as little Harry is to you Mrs. Percy," murmured one of the group who was seated by her side. "A lovely boy, such eyes!" and his own were fixed on those of Maud.

"Little Harry's eyes are blue," was her short, cold answer, "any one who has once looked at them must have seen that they are the counterpart of Mr. Percy's."

"A bad hit that of yours Vescey!" exclaimed Percy, whose quick ears nothing ever

escaped, as he turned his quizzing glance on his friend.

Presently the whole room resounded with laughter, for the child, having for some time pointed in one direction with his little finger, pronounced the unintelligible words "di—di," Mr. Percy much amused said—

"Do you know what the young dog is calling for now? You shall see the best fun in the world. Come, Maud, where have you hidden your son's favorite play-things."

And in spite of a slight frown of disapprobation from Mrs. Percy, and the words "I have put them away, dear Harry," he insisted on her producing the dice box; at the sight of which the babe clapped his tiny hands with glee, and, encouraged by the plaudits of Percy and the other gentlemen, proceeded to shake and throw the dice, his little head on one side—the expression of his eye, every movement, every gesture, so exact an imitation of his father, that even

Maud could not for a moment forbear a smile, though, when one of the party observed—

“There’s no mistaking now whose counterpart he is, Mrs. Percy—he will indeed be a *Harry Percy*—a true chip of the old block—.”

The smile had vanished—a look of care overspread her brow, and as she gravely watched her boy, an involuntary sigh heaved from her bosom.

“Ah ! here is Mrs. Percy sighing at the thoughts of her son resembling his father,” said Vesey laughing, “what do you say to that Percy ?”

“Oh I dare say—I dare say,” replied Percy quickly glancing at Maud, “of course, it is quite unusual for a lady to consider her husband as a model for imitation—I do not expect to be an exception to the rule.”

“Then I should advise Mrs. Percy to remove her son from your training, for he promises to be your *fac-simile*,” persisted Vesey.

“Oh there’s no fear of my interfering in his

education—I quite agree with Mrs. Percy as to the policy of making him as much unlike his father as possible.”

But though these words were spoken, apparently, in Harry Percy's usual frank, off-hand manner, there mingled in their tone a slight tinge of bitterness which did not wholly escape Lord Percival — he saw too Maud's cheek flush and her eyes turn uneasily towards him. The entrance of the nurse for the child, however, changed the current of the conversation.

CHAPTER III.

“ She felt her dream of happiness was gone.
But hope, still lingering, shed its heavenly ray
Like the fair star that in the waters shone
Still bright, tho’ they were gliding fast away.”

LORD Percival was thrown much into the society of the Percys, during his stay at Baden, and had ample opportunity of judging how matters stood between them; but as he had no inclination to act as reporter of

their private affairs, in his letters to May, his information concerning Maud was principally confined to accounts of the loveliness of her child, her own beauty and attractive demeanour, her undiminished affection for her father and sister.

One oft repeated question of the anxious May he always evaded answering—"Was she happy?" for day after day more fully convinced him she was not so. And why not? He could easily have replied to that enquiry, but he shrunk from wounding the heart of his innocent, trusting May by the communication. A brief retrospect of the past eighteen months, will enlighten our readers upon the subject.

We may remember how the unhappy Maud quailed in terror, before the startling reception her pathetic expostulation received from her husband, the night of the ball at Brussels. Truly, never again had Percy been annoyed by

a word, an allusion to the awful subject; though not the less did fervent prayers ascend to heaven, that the work of reformation in her husband's heart and life, which she had once presumptuously dared to hope, *her* influence could accomplish, might be effected by Him who can do all things; and soon as she saw him plunge deeper and deeper into the dreaded pursuit, and hope gradually grew dim and then faded into resignation, the words of her father, in the dark thinking hours of midnight, would rise fresh and distinct before her.

“God forbid that any one I loved should make the trial—should risk her happiness for the chance of alluring the heart of a worldling from his vices and follies—especially a *gambler*! her love and welfare would soon be less important in his eyes, than the turn of a die, or the speed of a horse!”

Agonising thoughts and feelings would disturb her soul, still she would exclaim,

“ But he loves me still—he loves none but me,” and that idea would lessen the magnitude of every other evil, and she would add :

“ Oh Heavenly Father in mercy preserve me that love, though I deserve nothing at thy hands !” and then with glad eagerness she would seize upon the slightest proof or symptom of her husband’s undiminished attention and tenderness, which still, either in society or at home, he continued to bestow upon her.

When the time of her child’s birth approached, and she ceased to mix in the gaieties at Brussels, she was almost reconciled to the many long, weary hours she spent alone, by the increase of affectionate endearment, the little kindnesses and attentions which Harry too well knew how to make doubly pleasing, when with her.

Still, at this trying period, how often had poor Maud’s heart yearned for a mother’s soothing support to raise her drooping spirits,

How seldom does Providence fail to raise up some friend in our necessity !

Not many weeks before her confinement Harry Percy announced his desire of quitting Brussels for Ems. It was April, the season when that town is insufferably dull—some of his particular friends were at Ems, and it would be quite as well he thought that the event should take place there; so thither they departed. Apartments in a quiet situation were secured for them, and there their child was born.

Maud was strolling in a little garden belonging to the house, a few evenings before her confinement, enjoying the sweet, spring air. Alone was she, for Percy, apparently much against his inclination, had been persuaded to join a party of friends on an expedition, which was to detain them a few days — she felt at that moment peculiarly lonely and depressed.

and cheer her in her moments of depression.

“This time last year!” she repeated to herself, and what bitter, agonising pangs those words inflicted; and as a bird, as if in mockery and spite, poured its tumultuous evening song into her ear, she leant her head upon her hand and wept.

“Are you not afraid of sitting so lightly clothed in the damp air?” were the words which at length roused her from her painful reverie — spoken in a voice which was music to her senses, for it was kind, and moreover, it was conveyed through the medium of an English tongue.

Maud immediately recognised the speaker.

A lady had lately taken apartments in that house, and her sitting-room opened into the same garden. Lucy had made acquaintance with her maid, and even had said to her mistress :

“I am sure ma'am it would be a blessing

if Mrs. Raymond could sit with you sometimes, when Mr. Percy is away ; it is not good for you to be moping here all day alone at such a time, and she might be very useful to you in many ways, when you are ill—for Lord knows ! you have nothing but a pack of ignoramuses about you ! They seem such quiet, respectable folks, so different from the people we have generally fallen in with at these places.”

But Maud had felt no inclination to follow Lucy's advice ; with true, English reserve she was ever averse to making advances to strangers, and since she had been on the continent, had never met with any one calculated to lessen or remove this prejudice.

But when Mrs. Raymond thus addressed her, she at once felt that Lucy had been right. She *was* different to any one she had seen since she left home, and the heart of the young creature yearned gladly towards her. For the

first time in the land of strangers, she had found one of her mother's *kind*.

The smile was returned --- the kind words gratefully answered, and their acquaintance ended not there.

The hour of trial arrived, and found the husband still absent, for the event had not been anticipated until some days later. Mrs. Raymond acted towards the lonely Maud the part of the tenderest mother ; and Percy, hastily summoned back to Ems, found his wife safe, and to his surprise, seated by the bedside, a distinguished looking woman who, though neither young nor handsome, he afterwards pronounced to Maud, "a charming person."

He was all gratitude for her kindness to his wife---entreated her not to let his return deprive his dear invalid of her valuable society, or himself of the pleasure of improving their acquaintance. Harry was not a person to scare away any

lady, and they quickly became excellent friends.

Mrs. Raymond's history was soon learnt. She was the widow of a distinguished officer, and had an only son, for whose sake she had left her own country for a residence in Germany, he having entered, as a student, the University of Gottingen. Her income was small, but she had evidently moved in the best society, and her cheerful, agreeable conversation, often detained Percy chatting many an hour by Maud's bedside, when the latter was too weak to be allowed to do ought but lie, quietly listening, and as it were, drinking in her husband's words, as she fixed her eyes on his animated face ; blessing Mrs. Raymond in her heart for being the means of keeping him so long in her sight, and away from the constant *bête noir* of her own thoughts, whenever he was absent—the gaming table !

Mrs. Raymond had known too much of the world not to trace through all the fascination

of Harry Percy, his true character, and when she began more fully to observe the class of society to which he was so entirely devoted, she marvelled not, what was the silent, secret care, which mixed with the ardent love, that beamed forth in every look and word of his young and lovely Maud---an expression of anxious excitement, far different from the calm, confiding affection, so beautiful and gratifying to witness in a wife towards her husband ; still she knew not for some time, the melancholy details, which rendered her feelings so peculiarly and painfully susceptible.

One evening as Maud lay on a sofa, her infant sleeping in her arms, Mrs. Raymond was seated by her side, indulging her maternal feelings, by pouring forth to her young friend, all the love and pride which filled her heart, descanting on the beauty --- the talents of her only son, and the mother's eyes glistened, and overflowed with joyful emotion,

when she more especially dwelt upon his devoted affection for herself.

“ Oh Mrs. Percy,” she ended by saying, “ may you know the blessing of possessing a dutiful, grateful child like mine, and then, if all else on earth is taken from you, still will you be rich !”

Her listener's head was lowly bent over her babe, and deep sobs burst from her heaving bosom.

Mrs. Raymond knew that Maud had lately lost her mother, and she attributed her emotion to tender recollections of that parent, called forth by the last words, and she felt her love and interest in the motherless girl increase still more powerfully ; she took her hand affectionately, and said with feeling :

“ May that darling child be to you, all that mine is to me---all that I am sure you, my dear young friend, have been to your *mother*.”

An exclamation of horror, almost a shriek burst from Mrs. Percy's lips, and turning her eyes wildly on Mrs. Raymond, she cried :

“ I broke my mother’s heart—and my father’s bitter words are for ever ringing in my ear—I proved the curse of all who loved me—My child !” she continued, in a softer but still agonised tone, as she quieted the cries of the babe, disturbed by her agitation, by pressing it still closer to her bosom, “ can *I* presume to hope that you will be permitted to prove to *your* mother a blessing ? Mrs. Raymond, if you knew all, you would not be surprised, when I say that I dread to hear this little treasure pronounce my name---call *me* mother---what have I to do with such a sweet blessing ?”

And then from her overcharged heart she poured forth a full confession of her filial errors ---her impetuous, wilful conduct, even from a child—the selfish, sinful step which she had taken, which had destroyed her suffering parent, and blasted for ever the happiness of her father ; but even in the agitation of the moment, not a word escaped her lips calculated to throw the slightest shadow of blame on her

husband, though Mrs. Raymond could easily fill up in her imagination all that Maud omitted in her narrative.

From that hour, the affection and gratitude of Maud and the interest of Mrs. Raymond increased tenfold, and not only was the strong, religious mind of the latter employed most judiciously, in calming and comforting the stricken conscience of our heroine by strengthening her hopes and faith in Him, who is a God of mercy, as well as a God of judgment, but she sought to render her worldly knowledge and experience, also serviceable.

It was therefore, when she saw Maud re-established in health, and day after day, more absorbed in the delightful duties of a mother, gratefully receiving, as a proof of her husband's kindness, and consideration, his sanction to her not mixing in the public gaieties at Ems, that, a short time before the Percys quitted that place for Baden, Mrs. Ray-

mond with extreme tact and delicacy, conveyed to Maud her opinion, that a wife should not allow even her maternal employments to prevent her sharing in the amusements and society of her husband.

Maud with nervous eagerness seized upon the hint, and once more hurried into the world, shining forth, with renewed beauty, by her husband's side ; but alas ! alas ! by degrees it began to dawn on her perception, with an agony too great for words, that she must not expect him to be now *exclusively* her own---hers alone !

It was when writhing under the first torture of this discovery, that she parted from her valuable friend, and removed to Baden, where they had principally resided up to the time Lord Percival found them there.

Soon after their arrival at that place, a scene had occurred very similar to the one described at Brussels, only, still more painful, equally ineffectual.

Maud in a moment of uncontrolled wretchedness ventured to remonstrate with Percy, on the new source of disquiet his conduct of late occasioned her, and again she had been silenced --- vanquished by his never failing address.

He plainly, rapidly and loudly told her that, "if her foolish jealousies were now to haunt him wherever he went---if the *innocent relaxation* of talking nonsense to a few silly women now and then, caused such torment to both her and himself, he must confine his pursuits entirely to those resorts she so much loathed and deprecated --- *places of gambling!* His heart was hers --- hers only---must ever upon her alone be fixed, until indeed such scenes of mistrust---suspicion, severed the tie which bound him to her!"

Upon this assurance had poor Maud to cling with the tenacity of one, who feels that without this feeble support, every

hope---nay, even life must perish!---but it brought not to her breast the peace and confidence of a happy wife! Neither did she feel herself free from those annoyances which it is often the fate of a neglected wife to endure.

If as Maud Sutherland she had turned with scorn and indifference from the attentions of admirers, and disdained the frivolous amusement of flirting, how much more now as a wife---a mother---did she loathe and shrink with horror from a word, a look, bordering on familiarity, and she was strengthened in the midst of the difficulties surrounding one so young and lovely, by perceiving, that whatever might be his own conduct, her husband was keenly observant of that of others towards his wife.

Harry Percy lived as live hundreds of his class; that is to say, he spent exactly as much as was perfectly agreeable, denying himself no luxury or enjoyment. Creditors pressed, and

their claims were not to be evaded or postponed. How they were satisfied Maud knew not. She was not troubled with any pecuniary communications. For what could she know of money matters? He begged her not to interfere with what she could not possibly understand. Thus was she always silenced, when misgivings arose in her mind, and gave her energy to broach the subject.

However Harry Percy passed quietly from Belgium into Germany, and for a brief moment the cloud had been dissipated.

Mr. Sutherland had settled eight hundred a year on his daughter, a sum sufficient to maintain her in perfect comfort on the continent, though, to mark his disapproval of her conduct, and to prevent the object of her choice from reaping a golden harvest in recompense for his dishonorable course of proceeding, the father had appropriated to the child, who was once the heiress of all his wealth, an

allowance, far below that which his second daughter would have received as a marriage portion.

The moments of tranquillity were not of long continuance to the Gambler's Wife.

Debts of honour were incurred, and then she was called upon to aid her husband in the difficulty. She was desired to write to her father, *to beg for money*. And she had obeyed—with what repugnance, may be imagined! Her first letter to her father since her marriage—and for such a purpose!—but Harry had told her that his honour was at stake, and she had, for his sake, done that, which, for herself, she would rather have starved than asked.

“I have received Mr. Sutherland's order to advance the sum required,” was the answer through the medium of the solicitor, “with the instruction that, for the future, he must beg that no more applications be made to him of the same nature; viz.—for the defrayment of any gambling debts incurred by Mr. Percy.”

We all know, that the cause, from which the bitterest feelings flow — rending asunder hearts the most closely, united is “money,” how much more then, may it widen the breach between those already divided !

Harry Percy resented the terms in which the benefit was conferred, and having been accommodated through the medium of the German Countess, before introduced to the reader, with the sum required, in a moment of pique, he returned the money to Mr. Sutherland.

From that time Maud had the increased misery of imagining her husband sunk still lower in the estimation of her father. She lost all pleasure in the correspondence till then kept up between herself and sister ; in the letters she received from home, she fancied coldness and constraint, far from being intended by May, who the more she heard condemnable in the conduct of her brother-in-law, felt only the more irresistibly drawn in love and pity towards

the beloved companion of her childhood, and who with sorrow even deeper than her sister's, felt that the correspondence was dying away, or only kept up at intervals in a constrained manner, thus affording little satisfaction to either of the beings, who really loved each other so fondly.

CHAPTER IV.

“ I pray thee let me weep to-night,
’Tis rarely I am weeping,
My tears are buried in my heart,
Like cave-locked fountains sleeping :
But oh ! to-night those words of thine
Have brought the past before me,
And shadows of long vanished years
Are passing sadly o’er me.”

L, E. L.

THREE long months of Lord Percival’s banishment had passed away, and he was beginning to weary of Baden, a residence possessing little to recommend it, to those not wedded to dissi-

pation, or to its chief attraction — *gaming*. Some of his friends had lately arrived at Paris and there he resolved to meet them.

A few evenings before the day of his departure, he called at the apartments of the Percys whom he found were also preparing for a move to Ems the following morning.

Maud was alone, but she told him she expected her husband home very soon, and begged Lord Percival to remain to see him. She listened for some time with apparent composure to her companion, who with eyes beaming with glad anticipation, spoke to her of his future plans, but at length her lips quivered, and she sought to change the subject by mentioning their own removal to Ems.

“Harry’s chief attraction there,” she said, “is the roe-buck shooting in the Duke of Nassau’s preserves, for which some of his friends have made a party.

Lord Percival rather doubted, whether she was right in her supposition.

“ And you Mrs. Percy,” he said, “ do you like Ems ?”

“ Oh yes !” she replied, “ as well, if not better, than any residence of that description, for there my child was born, and there I made a very valuable friend, and though I fear I shall not find her now at Ems, still the recollection of her affectionate kindness, has left a pleasant impression of the place on my mind—besides at this time of year it is quiet.”

“ Then you are tired of the gaieties of Baden ?” continued her companion.

“ It is a life of which every one must soon weary,” was her answer, accompanied by a slight sigh, “ and *you* I trust, do not think me fond of dissipation——No, tell them at home, Lord Percival,” she continued in an altered, faltering tone, “ tell them that I am not become the heartless woman of the world which I fear they imagine me now to be. Lord Percival,” she added, and she low-

ered her voice and turned away her eyes, “you I am sure, were not prepared to think well of me—how could you?—but you will at least tell those with whom your words will have weight, all that is likely to incline their hearts towards one, who, whatever she may have been—selfish—wilful ungrateful—all that is sinful! has at least a softened heart *now*,” and she pressed her hand upon her bosom as if striving to still its throbbings, “a heart which feels remorse—sorrow—and love—oh what yearning love for them—my own beloved father and sister!—and such a longing desire to see them once more——though perhaps——” her voice faltered, and for a moment she paused. “Forgive me Lord Percival,” she continued, — “forgive me for thus intruding upon you my feelings,” and she hastily flung away the tears from her cheek, “I was as weak as this when I first met you here, and now the thought that you will soon see them—for soon it appears to me—has made

me so envious," and she endeavoured to smile, "and yet you looked so disconsolate just now, when you talked of the three remaining months of your banishment; but they do but divide you from years, I trust, many — *many* years of happiness."

"Thank you, dear Mrs. Percy," said Lord Percival with much emotion, "and be assured that in my own happiness, I shall not be forgetful of yours—but that one of the pleasures I fondly anticipate, is being the means of bringing you and your sister together—so he added with an affectionate smile, "you cannot stand *very low* in my estimation."

He was interrupted by Maud, who, with a radiant look of joy lighting up her face, exclaimed :

"Now may God bless you for those words, Lord Percival—will you indeed bring darling May to see me? The dying wretch scorched

with the heat of fever, does not long more ardently for a drop of water to cool his parched lips, than I do, for one look from those sweet eyes——will you promise?" and she looked wildly and beseechingly in his face.

What could Lord Percival have refused to that imploring glance?

"Lord Percival," she continued, "I am going to confess to you, that when you first told me of your engagement to May, I was disappointed, for I had hoped—" and here her voice trembled and her eyes bent towards the ground, "I had hoped my base conduct towards one I am not worthy to name, might have been atoned for by a far superior blessing; in short that May—do not be angry Lord Percival," she added, for she perceived a deep flush pass over the young man's countenance.

"Balfour told me the last time I saw him, that he would never marry," was all he said in reply to Maud's speech, and she fancied that there mingled in his tones, somewhat of re-

proach and sorrow, and with a sigh she continued :

“ And had he married my sister, I could never have enjoyed—no I could never have dared to hope for the happiness you have promised me—how could I have expected, that he, in whose eyes I must appear so worthless, would have suffered his wife——”

“ You are mistaken Mrs. Percy, if you imagine that in Balfour’s mind there dwells the slightest shade of resentment,” interrupted Percival, “ on the contrary I assure you, he only thinks of you with—with pity !” this last word escaped perfectly without intention from his lips.

“ Pity !—only pity !” she exclaimed, and the form of Maud was instantly erect, her cheek and brow crimson, as with a keen, searching expression, she fixed her flashing eyes upon his face ; but the next moment she had recovered her self-possession, and before Lord Per-

cival could endeavour to explain himself, said calmly and sadly :

“ But I can hope for nothing more from him—I ought to be grateful that it is not hatred—and I *am* an object of pity—for are not my very joys embittered, am I not haunted day and night — by looks — words — remembrances, gone for ever — smiting with agony —oh ! yes indeed I am an object of pity,” and Maud looked wildly round her.

After a silence of a few moments she again spoke, and it was in a hurried manner, and with a nervous smile.

“ But Lord Percival, you must not let any one suppose, that I am so very miserable as not to be able to value the blessings bestowed upon me—my husband !” and her voice trembled and the colour rushed to her cheeks, “ my darling child !—but still—my dear friend—the truth is —that—my sin has found me out—But at least,” she added raising her eyes, and pressing her clasped hands more firmly together, “ it is well

that I feel the full consciousness, that no chastening in this life can be too heavy for my sin."

Lord Percival was deeply affected, and as he marked the unfeigned wretchedness of the countenance of poor Maud, he was more than ever struck by the entire change it exhibited to the proud girl of former days ; it was in a voice of grave concern that he said :

" But, dear Mrs. Percy look not so sad ; May will be wretched if I cannot tell her that I left you well and happy—and your father—think not that he has lost all interest in his child—you *are* happy I trust, independently I mean, of that deep affliction which time alone can cure ?"

" Oh yes," she answered hurriedly, and making an effort to arouse herself, " I am well—very well, although perhaps this gay life is not very favourable to my looks, and happy, much happier than I deserve to be——"

you must not judge of my felicity from this scene to-night—as I said before, my feelings are excited by the thought of——of——but I must not begin that subject again, for Harry will be here soon I hope, and he cannot bear to see me look miserable,” and Lord Percival saw her give a hasty, anxious glance at herself in an opposite mirror; “I wish you could have seen my little boy again before you went,” she continued, “but I fear he is gone to bed; I will go and see, you really ought to have the impression of his sweet, innocent, happy face to carry with you, and do away with the effects of mine.”

“Yes, I really must take strict note of every feature of his face, or I shall be well scolded by his aunt,” replied Percival; and Maud left the room with a smile, which it gladdened his heart to see.

She soon returned and told him little Harry was asleep, but looking so lovely.

Lord Percival at once read her wishes, and offered to accompany her to the

nursery. He was fond of children — but had it not been so, he must have been struck by the surpassing loveliness of the sleeping boy. The long, fringed eye-lashes resting on the rose-bud cheeks—the coral lips slightly parted with that angelic smile which the visions of childhood can alone call forth! He stooped to kiss the fair forehead, and well might he have said :

“ I saw thee in thy beauty,
And a tear came to mine eye,
As I pressed thy rosy cheek to mine,
And thought even THOU couldst die !”

A tremulous voice murmured in his ear :

“ Is not this alone enough to make me happy?—tell them what a little angel he is, and entreat them to pray that he may never be made an instrument of punishment to his parents. You must take this to May,” and Maud bent over the child and cut a bright lock from his brow, “ she will keep it I am sure with

pleasure, as a token of her sister's child—— should she never behold him on earth."

When they had returned to the sitting-room, and Maud was tying up the lock of hair, to which Lord Percival had prevailed upon her to add one of her own, a ring at the door was heard, and saying it must be her husband, she again first hastily glanced at the mirror and then towards the door in eager expectation; but instead of Harry Percy, Mr. Holloway was announced.

Maud bowed with cold civility to her unknown visitor.

He was a coarse, vulgar looking man, but had the easy, assured manner of one, who felt himself of consequence—a deportment so peculiarly odious in one of that stamp.

"Sorry to disturb you Mrs. Percy," he exclaimed looking knowingly at her companion, after he had favoured her with a broad stare, "but I thought I should find your husband at home,

as I called at the rooms and he wasn't there
——at the Countess's I suppose, eh?"

"I expect Mr. Percy home soon," replied Maud with dignified *hauteur*, though the colour first mounted to her cheeks, and then departed leaving her deadly pale.

"Well I can wait a bit," he replied as he seated himself, "for we have a great deal of business on hand, and I find Mr. Percy goes to Ems to-morrow, though that does not much signify, as I intend a trip there also——You've heard the Doncaster news sir, I conclude," he continued turning to Percival, "favorite, completely floored—done to nothing!—told Percy it would be so—lucky for him he left it all to me, or he'd have made a pretty mess of it."

"Mrs. Percy is not much interested in these details," said Lord Percival haughtily, feeling very much inclined to order him out of the room, for by this time he remembered who he was——in his estimation very little above the level of a common black leg, a creature em-

ployed by his superiors to do all the dirty work of their gambling transactions, and who existed on the vices, the folly, the inexperience of others.

“And,” thought Lord Percival, “does such a being dare to sit thus in the presence of the sister of my pure May, as freely, as much at his ease, as if he were in a racing stand, or a gambling booth. He saw the cheeks of Maud grow paler and paler—her form instinctively shrink with loathing at the presence of the man, and he exclaimed to her aloud, for he could refrain no longer :

“Pray do not remain here on my account, Mrs. Percy ; you will I am sure be kind enough to make my adieux to Mr. Percy should I not see him to night.”

Maud was gladly about to avail herself of the hint, when Harry Percy entered.

He looked a little disconcerted on beholding the very inappropriate addition to the party, and the familiar greeting of Holloway, he met

with a degree of visible impatience ; however he soon dismissed him, by telling him in his usual off-hand manner, that “ some of his friends” and he mentioned several by name, “ were waiting for him at Chaubert’s, all impatience to see him.”

“ What in the world could have induced that confounded fellow to intrude himself here ?” said Percy, as Holloway left the room, as if in apology for his presence, “ but he’s just come brim full of news from Doncaster, so I suppose considers himself privileged.”

Lord Percival did not remain much longer after this—there existed too little congeniality between him and Harry Percy, to call forth an easy flow of intercourse—the latter knew of Percival’s engagement to May, but considering the light in which he was regarded by her family, he could only slightly touch upon the subject and they parted with no feeling of regret. Not so the young Lord and Maud.

He had scarcely ever felt so oppressive a

weight at his heart, as on bidding adieu to the pale, lovely creature, whose suppressed emotion, he could well discern, though with apparent calmness she breathed her farewell words.

“ You are very happy now,” she murmured with a tremulous smile, “ in the bright prospect, of so soon seeing those you love so well ; when we meet again, may you be *still happier* ! Adieu !” and she affectionately pressed his hand.

“ God grant that so it may be with you, poor, beautiful young creature !” was Percival’s inward response, as he turned to depart.

We humbly trust that the prayers of both were heard in Heaven, and fulfilled.

CHAPTER V.

“ The shark is there,
And the shark's prey, the spendthrift, and the leech
That sucks him.”

COWPER.

It was on the day after their arrival at Ems at the *table d'hôte*, that both Maud and Percy were attracted by the agreeable manner and appearance of a young man who sat opposite to them.

There was a joyous animation in his bear-

ing, as he good naturedly laughed and talked with those around him, which usually constitutes the superiority, in such society, of a young foreigner, over the shy, reserved youth of our own country, still at a single glance it was impossible to mistake him for ought but an Englishman. He was graceful and polite---all alacrity in the service of every lady near him; but it was evidently with more of *empressement*, that he seized on each slight opportunity of shewing his attention to his beautiful *vis-a-vis*, on whom, when first seating himself, he had for a moment fixed an almost startled gaze of respectful admiration; and a bright look illumined his countenance, when she chanced to bestow on him a gentle smile of thanks, or occasionally joined in the conversation, which Harry Percy had soon commenced with him, shewing that he was equally attracted by the young stranger.

Many friends of Percy's were at the table, therefore long before the dinner was finished,

the repeated mention of his name, seemed to cause a new light to dawn on the young man's mind, for he evidently regarded both Maud and her husband, with more thoughtful interest, and on their rising was immediately at their side, and, frankly and modestly apologising for his presumption, begged to be permitted to ask, whether they were those friends his mother, Mrs. Raymond, had been so fortunate as to meet the previous year, and of whom (and he glanced at Maud) he had heard so much.

With surprise and pleasure they made themselves known, Maud eagerly enquiring if Mrs. Raymond was at Ems. Alas ! she was not ! she was gone to England on business of importance.

“ And alone,” he added ; “ I begged to be allowed to accompany her, but she was afraid of unsettling my thoughts just now, and left me to study hard.”

“ Which doubtless you are doing at a great rate,” said Percy with an arch smile.

“ Yes, I assure you till now I have been so close at my work, that I was absolutely obliged to take a trip to Ems to clear my brains.”

“ Well ! we must have a day together at the Duke’s bucks,” said Harry, as Raymond gladly accepted the Percys’ invitation, to take a turn with them in the arcade, where, in a bower-like sort of orchestra a full band was playing one of Rossini’s liveliest airs. “ In short,” added Percy, “ I hope we shall see a great deal of you. How like he is to his mother, Maud !---his voice---his smile---I wonder we did not at once guess who he was !”

“ I thought it was a face we ought to have known,” replied Maud with a sweet smile, “ it was very stupid of me, when I had so many lively descriptions of your person, and even constantly looked at a picture of Louis Raymond, though certainly it represented a pretty boy of ten years old.”

“ And as I am now an ugly boy of more

than twenty," he replied laughing, "it is not very likely to have assisted you in recognising me, any more than the partial picture of my dear mother."

"How you must love her!" said Maud, with whom he was now alone, Harry Percy having been arrested in his progress by another group, to whom she had merely bowed coldly as she passed on.

"Love her!" and the young man's dark eyes were lifted, with a deep, earnest expression to her face, "I should indeed be a wretch of ingratitude, if I did not---if you only knew what a mother she is to me---the sacrifices she makes for my comfort and benefit."

"And I am quite certain" interposed Maud, "from all she told me, you are a blessing to her!"

"I hope in some degree I contribute to her happiness; but I am full of faults Mrs. Percy---I fear I inconvenience her by getting rid of too much money, though I never hear a word

about it from her. A college life is expensive even in Germany ; but” continued he, “ a rich old uncle of mine is just dead, who ought to have left me something handsome, and that is the affair which has taken my mother to England ; if such proves the case, I shall then have the happiness of feeling, that she will have no longer pecuniary cares to trouble her, and what joy that will be ! Really, Mrs. Percy, you must forgive me for troubling you with all these domestic details, as if I had known you for years, but from having heard so much about you, I fancy I have really made your friendship long ago.”

“ At all events,” replied Mrs. Percy, “ I think you need not apologise to one, towards whom your dear mother acted as she would have done for a daughter---I am, be assured, deeply interested in all whom she loves, and I warmly wish her success in her present mission.”

At that moment a man passed close by them, who young Raymond was surprised to see touch his hat, with an air of easy assurance to Mrs. Percy, for his appearance did not seem such, as to give him a right to that privilege, and he wondered not that she scarcely returned the salutation, and averted her head, with a half offended, half disgusted air. Raymond was favoured with a scrutinising survey, and when he turned, half inclined to resent the impertinence of the man's demeanour, he saw he had joined Mr. Percy's party, and was greeted with the utmost cordiality—It was Holloway.

Let us listen to a few words of the conversation which took place between the group of loungers.

“By the bye, Percy, who is that young fellow walking with your wife?” enquired Sir John Turton, a tall, pale man of about forty, with a voice peculiar from its low, soft tone,

his manner remarkable for its insinuating address.

“His name is Raymond,” replied Percy, “his father was a General, who died some years ago—an excellent family I believe—his mother was very kind to Mrs. Percy, when she was ill, and we feel bound to shew him civility.”

“Raymond! Oh yes,” interrupted Holloway with a significant wink, “I know all about him—old Ravenhill who died the other day must have been his uncle—I used to have dealings with him once upon a time.”

“Has he any expectations?—that promising young fellow I mean?” demanded the same soft voice of Sir John Turton, his serpent eyes following at the same time the youth.

“Oh, I take it, Sir John,” resumed Holloway with another knowing twitch of his face, as he fell back with the worthy Baronet behind the rest.

We will not intrude upon their private conference.

* * * * *

A few minutes after, Raymond all life and gaiety, was standing laughing and talking with Percy and his companions, to whom he had been introduced, Maud having returned to the hotel with her little boy, whom she had encountered returning from his walk, and Sir John at his own request was speedily added to his new acquaintances.

No doubt the unsuspecting Raymond esteemed himself most fortunate, in being received in so flattering a manner, into the society of such an agreeable and aristocratic set of his countrymen, by whom also, his own ready wit and talented conversation, seemed so well appreciated — the flattered and inexperienced youth ceased to heed the fact that the questionable looking individual Holloway, was

also suffered amongst them, and on terms of the greatest familiarity—that he heard topics broached familiarly and constantly, which he had ever been taught to shun—to look upon, as sin, even from his infancy; a lesson impressed upon his mind with the deepest anxiety by his mother, from the circumstance of his uncle, Lord Ravenhill, having nearly beggared his estate by gambling. Distress and excitement had subsequently produced insanity — and when long years had considerably amended the state of his affairs, he could no longer enjoy his recruited fortune, a part of which, Mrs. Raymond now hoped might pass to her son.

Did the thought flash across the young man's mind, that Harry Percy, whom his artless nature had begun to regard, as the paragon of every thing delightful in a gentleman, was the very person his mother had declared was, with all his attractions, the last man with whom she would wish her son to become too greatly fascinated? no, Raymond only

beheld in his new friend, the kind hearted, frank, agreeable Harry Percy—by him into what coil could he possibly be led ?

And readers, do Harry Percy the justice to believe, that the base idea which filled the minds of others, never even for a moment glanced across his imagination. Faulty—infatuated ! it was his *own* ruin, which he seemed ever bent on achieving, not that of others ; far less would he have meditated the destruction of a young and unsuspecting friend—but whether he were therefore cleansed in the sight of Heaven from all implication in the villany that followed—who dare say ? Harry Percy had read the words, “ Have no fellowship with the works of darkness but rather reprove them.” He had turned a deaf ear to this admonition. He *had* fellowship with the works of darkness—and upon his head fell the dreadful responsibility of *example*——might not he fall under this awful denunciation ? — “ He judgeth every one according to his works.”

“ It is well known by those who have visited the different watering places of Germany, that at Ems *the rooms* are little frequented, except by the very lowest and ill-looking set of beings ; nevertheless it must not be presumed from this, that *there*, gambling prevails less than where it is less public. No, those more aristocratic and elegant meetings held at the private lodgings of gentlemen—nobles ! — that most hateful process, by which the cool, calculating villain fleeces the thoughtless and wavering, is too often in full action.”

Young Raymond was not, therefore, startled by being called upon to follow his new acquaintances into any of those dens of iniquity, which it did not surprise him to see Holloway enter, nor was he embarrassed by having to decline so doing, as he must have done according to a promise extracted by his mother—on the contrary, most of the group, and Sir John in particular, looked too elegantly refined “ to have unlocked his lips in this unhallowed air.”

A shooting excursion was arranged for the following day, and that evening Raymond spent in the Percys' saloon, completely winning the heart of his beautiful hostess by a good game of romps with little Harry. They were mostly alone, for though a few gentlemen, amongst whom was Sir John Turton, dropped in during the first part of the evening, by degrees they had soon disappeared.

"Are you going for a stroll this fine night?" said Sir John addressing Raymond before he departed, and the young man was on the point of declaring his willingness to do so, when in a somewhat hasty tone Harry Percy exclaimed,

"What ! going already Raymond ? I thought you had prevailed on Mrs. Percy to give you some music ; I am sure she quite reckons upon your society for the rest of the evening."

"Oh if I am not intruding upon Mrs. Percy

"I shall be but too delighted," he eagerly replied, and consequently remained.

Maud felt some surprise at the moment at the anxiety visible in her husband's manner, as he pressed Raymond to stay with her, but often and often, in after days, did she recal those few words, and cling to them, as the only means of removing from her heart, a part at least, of the torturing, agonising thoughts which weighed it down even to the earth.

In a few days, young Raymond appeared to have become almost domesticated with the Percys, in short never happy, but in the society of either Maud or her husband ; of the former he became quite the *cavaliere servente*, seeming to enjoy her conversation even more than that of her husband, and to delight in the calm of her presence, rather than in the exciting pursuits of Percy and his friends.

Manly and high spirited, there was also in his nature, a gentleness of manner, an almost boyish simplicity and purity of mind, which

emanated no doubt from his having from a child been constantly with a mother, who possessed so richly all those qualities of heart and mind calculated to yield "the deep controlling influence," which Heaven has ordained should link together the *mother* and the *son*, and which unlike aught other on earth, even amid the strong passions of increasing years, is seldom totally severed.

Louis Raymond had lost no time in writing to his parent to inform her of the new friends he had made, descanting enthusiastically on their kindness---their fascination!---he little imagined with what feelings of dread and sorrow Mrs. Raymond would learn, that the man, whom her inexperienced son held forth as the very model of all perfection and excellence, was Harry Percy!

Oh! that time for once could have stayed its course, from the day the son's letter was dispatched, to that which brought the mother's reply to it---for truly, if her earnest warning

could have availed to turn a wavering mortal from destruction, that epistle would not have been written in vain---but alas! ere it was penned, Louis had dipped his feet in the magic stream, whose property it is, to draw irresistibly into its tide, the unfortunate victim, deeper and deeper, till he is sucked into its roaring waters, too often there to perish.

CHAPTER VI.

"Lasciate ogni speranza voi ch'è ntrate."

DANTE'S INFERNO.

For nearly a week after her acquaintance with young Louis Raymond, Maud's evenings had been spent chiefly in his society alone, for he never failed to beg that he might pass an hour or two with her ; he was passionately fond of music, and it was a pleasure to sing to him.

And then he would read to her, and talk of his mother, and thus agreeably while away the time which would otherwise have been spent by her in solitary sadness, or miserable reflections called forth by knowing that, under the very same roof, from the moment her husband quitted her presence, till too often the pale grey dawn broke in upon his unhallowed vigils, and on her sleepless eyes, he was employed in recklessly sacrificing his substance—his health, both of soul and body, at the base shrine he worshipped.

One evening however Harry Percy had sat with her later than usual, and Louis Raymond was there in almost mad spirits ; for that morning a letter crossing the one he had lately dispatched to his mother, had arrived, informing him, that by the death of his uncle, a sum far exceeding their expectations would devolve on him ; there was indeed some chance of the will being disputed by a relative, on the score of

the doubt of the sanity of the Testator at the time he made his will ; still the legal opinions were in young Raymond's favor, and Harry Percy good naturedly entered with his usual energy, into the hopes and joys of his young friend.

“ Oh do not go quite yet Harry !” said Maud with beseeching earnestness, when at length, after one or two messages brought by the servant, he had with a look of reluctance risen to depart “ I shall retire to my room in half an hour—stay with me till then.”

There was a look of eager gratitude upon her countenance, and in the tone with which, when he acquiesced, she thanked him, which struck young Raymond, who in his usual frank, artless manner exclaimed,

“ Why Mrs. Percy, I should imagine you need not be so very grateful—it must indeed be something very powerful—some very fascinating attraction, which could draw any one

away from your society—don't you think so Mr. Percy?"

Probably had the youth reflected before he spoke, he would have had more tact than to have made this speech, and certainly the next moment he wished it unsaid, for he saw by Mrs. Percy's face, that he had uttered something *mal a propos*, and Percy changed the subject in somewhat a hasty tone.

A knock at the door at this moment interrupted the trio, and Sir John Turton, accompanied by another gentleman, entered the room—the former with the most humble apologies for the intrusion, seated himself by Maud.

"Damer," he said, "had come in search of Percy who was in great request, in consequence of some difficult question which could not be settled without him—he feared they were sadly disturbing Mrs. Percy."

"You are indeed," was the answer might have been read in the listener's expressive countenance, as she watched her husband

quickly drawn into exciting conversation by Lord George, and, as apparently forgetful of all besides he soon took his arm and left the room, she inwardly murmured, " Could you not have left him with me in peace for one evening ?"

Sir John met with no encouragement to remain, but he lingered for some time, conversing so agreeably with Louis Raymond, that the latter thought Mrs. Percy might have mingled somewhat more of graciousness, and less of *hauteur*, in her deportment towards her guest.

At length at the suggestion of Louis, who knew it was past her hour for retiring, both gentlemen took leave of their hostess and departed together, and Maud not many minutes after left the room.

To reach the flight of stairs which led to her bed-chamber, she had to turn some way down a long gallery, at the extremity of which, was situated the apartment, given up to the use of Harry Percy and his associates during their

stay at Ems—for what purpose Maud too well knew, and she was accustomed to fly with rapid steps and suspended breath from its vicinity, as though she feared sounds might meet her ears, far more terrible and abhorrent now, then even when she first heard them at Wisbaden, on the commencement of her career, as a Gambler's Wife !

But this night Maud paused when she reached the staircase, for she had perceived as she glided up the gallery, Sir John Turton, and Louis Raymond standing at a little distance in advance, and she heard words which painfully arrested her attention, and made her stop on the first step, and then stand as if rooted to the spot.

“ What ! are you afraid of us my good fellow ?” said Sir John in a gentle, bantering tone, “ well, you are very wise I dare say, but for my part, I think you are just as likely to fall into mischief, by sitting so much with that beautiful woman.”

Maud hardly distinguished the words of Raymond's answer; her heart was beating too high with indignation, and Sir John continued in the same mild patronising accents, but without any approach to derision.

“ Oh no ! I admire your prudence and obedience vastly—don't think I wish to lead you into playing against your conscience—no ! I have too great a regard for you—I merely thought it would amuse you to come with us, and look on a little while, instead of going to bed at this early time of night, but——”

At this moment the door of the room had opened to admit a servant carrying in wine and refreshments, and from thence issued a blaze of light, together with sounds, which to an inexperienced ear, might have seemed, merriment—but to the wife of one of those revellers, how different ! “ The drunkard's fancied bliss ” would not have echoed more harshly on her senses, than did the noise of those excited

voices, or rather *that voice*, for only one seemed to reach her, and it was her husband's !

She forgot all but him—for one instant, a sudden desperate impulse swayed her—to fly to him—brave all !—shame derision—even *his* anger, and once more entreat him to follow her from that hated spot—those baneful associates ! but this excitement only lasted for a moment—the next had told her it would be all in vain, and her burning heart, had sunk into the despairing resignation of a *Gambler's Wife* !—She would have shrunk quietly away, but another glance around her, recalled her to the circumstance which had at first arrested her progress.

The opening of that door had produced a totally dissimilar effect on young Raymond's mind—nothing could have more opportunely occurred to aid the tempter's design. An inexpressible longing to join that bright scene of gaiety sprang to his young heart, and Maud beheld him hurrying, by Sir John's side,

towards (a horrid foreboding whispered to her heart) *his destruction!*

The face of his mother—his doting mother seem to rise up before her. She darted into the vestibule, Louis's name faintly issuing from her lips — too faintly for him to hear, and she was forced to stop and press her hands over her eyes, to hide the picture, which from the open door burst upon her view; when she again uncovered them, all she beheld was the door closed on the new victim!

At that moment she saw a waiter approaching---she hurried to meet him, and steadying her voice, desired him to go and tell Mr. Raymond she wished to speak to him for a moment in her sitting-room, whither she retired, awaiting, in breathless anxiety, the result of her message --- but minute after minute fled, yet he came not, and at length with a sickening shudder at her heart, she went to her bed-

room, to pray that the widow's only son might escape the snare which surrounded him.

"Harry! did Louis Raymond play last night?" was the eager, trembling question she asked her husband the next morning.

"Play! that he did, and monstrous good luck he had, like all young beginners."

"Harry this must not be---for his mother's sake save him."

"I, Maud, what can I do? I cannot act the part of Cerberus to all the foolish boys who fall in my way."

"But you can surely speak to him? Oh for mercy's sake tell him the danger he is incurring."

"I tell him?---a pretty person I am to lecture on such a subject---much good it would do truly!"

A deep sigh was Maud's answer.

"No," continued Harry with more seriousness, "but really I would advise you to give your *protégé* a hint, that he had better keep

out of the way of mischief; you can do what to me is impossible—and even with you it will require much delicate tact—that is, warn him against becoming on terms of too great intimacy and confidence with Sir John Turton, and one or two of the others, but especially Turton, for *entre nous*, he is a slippery hand for any young fellow to fall into.”

“Must I warn him against those, whom he sees are my husband’s associates, who are even suffered in his wife’s presence---and yet whom he considers so vile?” cried Maud in an irrepressible tone of bitter remonstrance, “Oh God! is it amongst such as these, my precious child is destined henceforth to mingle?” And then, the poor young wife, saw the dreaded frown darken the brow of her still, fondly loved Harry --- his eyes assume the angry expression she could never bear to behold, and she hid her face on his bosom and murmured in timid accents,

“Oh forgive me---forgive me!”

* * * * *

In the course of that day Louis Raymond appeared before Maud Percy. He was in his usual high spirits, and came the bearer of a beautiful and expensive toy for the little Harry, but which, to his surprise, the mother with some coldness, but more of sadness in her manner, declined accepting."

"My dear Mrs. Percy you quite distress me; I did not think you would consider it a liberty, my pleasing myself by thus trying to ingratiate the favor of my little friend.

"It is very kind of you," hesitated Maud, "but——"

"You need not have any fear that I am ruining myself," he continued laughing and colouring, "you have no idea how rich I have suddenly become."

"Mr. Raymond," said Maud, "I must apologise for presuming to speak to you upon a subject, which I am aware you may think no concern of mine; but for the sake of your dear

mother, I will frankly and at once tell you, that I have a striking horror, a superstitious dread, of any thing, even the merest trifle, bought with the price of sin, and if my fears are rightly founded, thus it is with the riches of which you boast."

"Sin, Mrs. Percy!" exclaimed the young man, astounded by this solemn harangue, and still more by the penetrating glance she fixed on his face, with her large, piercing eyes. "Sin! that is rather a severe term I must say for——for——"

"Mr. Raymond," she concluded, "had you last night no pangs of conscience which whispered to you 'forbear!'—could you think that your mother would have sanctioned the deed?—did no anxious, tender warning from her lips ring reproachfully in your ears?—if so, what could it be but sin?"

"You are quite right Mrs. Percy," replied Louis, "I did think of my mother when Sir

John invited me into the room. I remembered her horror at anything like play, and that ought to have been sufficient to have kept me away; but I don't know how it was—I saw all looking so brilliant and gay, that it seemed dull to go off to bed and leave such agreeable company—so in I went, and there I found Mr. Percy.”

“ Yes—yes !” interrupted Maud hastily, and turning pale, “ but why did you not come when I sent you a message ?”

“ What message ? I never received any I assure you.”

“ I sent a servant to say I wished to speak to you.”

“ Ah ! I saw one come in, look at me, and say something to Sir John Turton who stopped him ; but my attention was called away, and I heard no more about it.”

For one instant after these words, Maud paused and a shudder passed through her frame.

“ Mr. Raymond,” she then began in a trem-

bling tone, "it is a repellent task for me to speak ill of any one, or create suspicion of a fellow creature, but let me beseech you to be cautious, with regard to Sir John Turton—nay, as much as possible shun his society—for I fear he will prove a dangerous friend—— You will think me strangely officious and meddling in your affairs," she continued with a sigh and a faint smile, "but if you will take my advice, or rather comply with my earnest entreaty, you would immediately leave Ems, and return to Gottingen."

"Oh pray Mrs. Percy, do not propose such a disagreeable scheme," eagerly interrupted Louis in a half comic, half serious manner—do not order me away."

"I do not order—I only *entreat*."

"Entreat—that is worse, for who could resist your entreaties?—you must not indeed—in a week or two my mother will return from England—it is arranged she is to meet

me here, and then we shall be all together—such a delightful party ! You are very good—very kind to interest yourself so much in my concerns, but do not think me so very weak as to be influenced in any way by Sir John—he is an agreeable person, but there is something certainly rather underhand about him; although I must assure you he was in no way implicated in leading me to that unlucky act, which has so justly incurred your censure. No, he is not like Mr. Percy, whom I told my mother when I wrote the other day, I considered the perfect model of a gentleman—one who bears honour and truth imprinted on his countenance, and who renders everything he says or does, irresistible—I cannot tell you how much I admire him, and I really think I should have turned away even at the door last night, had not I caught a glimpse of his face—so bright, so animated ! Then when I approached the table at which he sat, and stood behind him watch-

ing the game, I became by degrees as excited and anxious for his success, as though it had been for my own; and at last—let me confess all Mrs. Percy,” for Maud made a faint attempt to interrupt him, “and then scold me as much as you like—I found myself betting—I really could not help it—I was quite infected with desire to try my luck—the game was at length over—they all rose to take some refreshment—‘What Raymond, you here?’ Mr. Percy said in a tone of surprise, ‘it must have been you that brought me such luck to night.’ Following the example of the rest, I drank more than one glass of wine, and afterwards, when a new table was being formed, I fear it required no very earnest pressing, to make me take my seat at it. Mr. Percy however at first exclaimed, ‘No no my good fellow, this is not a place for a youngster like you—get along to bed;’ but when Sir John called out from another table, ‘I advise you to join *us* Raymond, they are rather too high for you there,’

he said, ‘ Well well, sit down then,’ and I was glad to obey him—and I played——Oh I must confess, it is most exciting work, and having once began, I could have gone on for ever ! Now you see Mrs. Percy that after all Sir John had nothing to do with it.”

He suddenly paused, for something like a groan escaped Maud’s lips ; during his long speech she had leant her brow upon her hand, her elbow supported by the table, her face nearly concealed by her long curls, and Louis little knew how, as he rattled on, his every word was entering like a dagger into her heart, inflicting a wound which was to rankle there, and never heal.

Then it was her husband of whom in, mercy ---inequity, she should bid the incautious youth beware !---from whom she should beseech him to fly---yes, and not from the wretch, whose serpent tongue and black heart, could not even be hidden under the mask of hypocrisy ---her husband!---no malicious, grovelling deceiver,

but alas, alas ! whose unrivalled powers of fascination she well knew, could produce a far more destructive influence over the victim before him---Should she say “ Beware of my husband !—doubt even those qualities which appear to you so delightful---only see him as he really is—a *Gambler!*”

Should she say this --- should she entreat Raymond, *for fear of her husband* to leave Ems---to fly from him, who himself had bid her warn the young man of another?—Still---dreadful thought!---it was Harry Percy, who had undesignedly drawn the young man towards the destroying stream---he was the one to make him long to quaff a draught of its intoxicating waters --- the first to bid him “ sit down,”—sit down to taste the poisonous drops and then desire more—Yes, on her husband's head, if harm came of it, must that harm be laid——but oh God ! could she say “ Beware of my husband ”—the father of her

child — her still beloved — too well beloved Harry—denounce him, as a systematic Gambler?—No—no—never—she could not!——she was silenced.

Maud rose from her seat, and Louis Raymond beheld with terror her death-like pallor—the trembling steps with which she walked towards the door. When she had reached it, she paused, and turning, said in a low voice, her eyes bent to the ground,

“ If you would follow my earnest advice Mr. Raymond, you would go hence, or if not, think, I beseech---I supplicate you---I, who know from sad experience, the fatal effects of disobedience—I *implore* you to think, whether it would not break your mother’s heart, were you to become a Gambler?—beware ---beware of *all*---*all* who are such !”

“ It would indeed break my mother’s heart,” thought the young man, when Maud had left the room, “ but fear not for me lovely lady !

No, I hope I am not so foolish as you seem to imagine---trust me for taking care of myself ---I wonder how she could make up her mind to marry Harry Percy, for with all his perfections, a GAMBLER assuredly he is !”

CHAPTER VII.

“ I seek
 to find some ease—
Ease to the body some, none to the mind
From restless thoughts, that like a deadly swarm
Of hornets armed, no sooner found alone
But rush upon me, thronging, and present
Times past, what once I was and what am now.”

SAMSON AGONISTES.

THE evening of the following day Louis had returned from a shooting excursion, on which he had accompanied Percy and several other gentlemen. The whole party sat down to one of the choicest suppers which the first rate

artiste of the *Hotel de Rupie* had ever prepared for the fastidious palates of *connoisseurs* in the important art of *la cuisine*."

There was one at the table who considered that day the happiest of his life, whose elevated spirits soon drove away all thought---all care ---and made him forget every other idea, but that he was in the society of about a dozen most talented, agreeable companions — Harry Percy at their head, and next to him, in spite of all---Sir John Turton !

They rose --- the doors of an adjoining apartment were thrown open, and Raymond arm-in-arm with a young nobleman followed the tide which flowed through the portals---it was *the room*, in which he now found himself !

" Well Raymond what are you for?" cried his companion as the tables began to be formed, and he still stood as if rooted to the spot, an uneasy feeling mingling with the ex-

cited beating of his heart, which told him he *ought not to be there*.

“ I---I---” he stammered, “ nothing, nothing thank you just now.”

“ Nothing ! how devilish slow !” was the gay Lord’s cruel comment, as he seated himself at a table with Sir John and another man. But who are we to have ?” he exclaimed as he glanced around. “ *Rouge et noir* seems to be the go to night. Come Raymond, down with you, you’re our man.”

“ No no, nonsense,” said Sir John, in a gentle though supercilious tone of voice, “ Mr. Raymond does not patronise this sort of amusement.”

“ I am afraid I should make a poor hand of it,” said Raymond, “ I should only be in your way---Upon my word I never touched a card before last night.”

“ And a pretty lucky business you made of it,” said a third person, Mr. Fountain.

“Come try your luck again,” exclaimed Lord C—— impatiently, “what, are you afraid of——ruining yourself?”

“Or us perhaps,” interposed Fontain, “I think that’s most likely to be the case; at least with me, unlucky devil that I am!”

“Come, come,” said Sir John rising, “pray let Mr. Raymond keep his luck — do not allow him to learn like others that it will soon tire of him; the other night certainly he won—to-night he may lose — I commend his prudence.”

This speech delivered in the softest tones, however, decided Raymond’s fate——the idea crossed his mind that he might be suspected of fearing to lose his precious winnings. The blood rushed in torrents to his cheeks—it was so mean—so pitiful an assumption—so debasing!—he resolved to play till he had lost again, what he had before won.

“Well, I’m your man,” he carelessly ex-

claimed, as he seated himself, seized the dice-box, and shook it—"what's the game?"

"Hazard!" was the answer,—and at *hazard*, a word which from his boyhood had been associated in his mind with vague ideas of vice and horror, did he find himself now playing, with a degree of excitement and enthusiasm equalling, if not exceeding, any other player in the room——Yes!—even though at first, every time he shook the fatal dice, the words, "Think of your mother — would it not break her heart were you to become a Gambler?" echoed on his ear—still he went on—still he threw again, and again—for he won—he won!

"Good God what luck!" he at length heard pronounced behind him—he started—that sacred name sounded so awful—so blasphemous, pronounced in such a place. He looked round and beheld Harry Percy.

"Take care my good fellow what you are

about," he said in a low voice. "take care, I beseech you."

"Take care!" thought Raymond, "had he not already at one sitting, won what far exceeded his annual income?" So on he went!—others now gathered round the table, and he, whose warning words had but a few moments before rung in his ear, was now betting furiously on his throws, thereby increasing his interest and excitement.

At length fortune seemed inclined to turn—Raymond lost—it was but a trifle in comparison to what he had gained—his companions however suddenly paused—they said they had had enough.

He remonstrated, for they made it too evident, that it was entirely from consideration for him that they ceased, and he felt quite ashamed of sweeping off the table the gold that lay before him—but others, among whom was Harry Percy, prepared to succeed them

at the table, the latter whispering to Louis in his quick way as he seated himself,

“Come get off with you my boy—your mother would never approve of all this!”

“You are a very proper person to preach to me,” was the thought which glanced across Raymond’s mind, who felt rather piqued at the dictatorial tone of one who, at least, he thought had no right to dictate to him on such a subject; and when he stood for an instant near the table, and watched the game begin, and noted the flushed features, the quick, eager eyes of his reprover, as they flew like lightning from the throws, to the dice—saw him ever and anon push back with irritable impatience, the dark hair from a brow, seemingly formed by nature for the throne of that intellect which had been so largely bestowed upon him—that intellect, completely thrown away upon the degrading passion which had taken possession of his mind—and when Raymond heard from his lips the name of God, which he

had been taught to pronounce with awe, used in common, with vain curses on his unlucky attempts—the young man shuddered—turned away, and with a dizzy, confused sensation walked towards the door. But he felt the money still in his hand, and he suddenly paused, murmuring, “And am I too a Gambler?—oh my mother !”

He was on the point of dashing the winnings to the ground, when a soft, oily voice whispered in his ear,

“That’s right my good fellow, put your money in your pocket; you have made a lucky hit—don’t stay to let us win it back again—it is wealth to a young man like you, not very flush——.”

“Sir John I have no wish to win yours, or any man’s pitiful money. You treat me like a beggar or a child,” and an oath burst, for the first time, from the young man’s lips. So soon does civil communication spread its corrupting influence around a victim !

The next instant he had stammered out an apology for his ungracious reception, of what doubtless was said in kindness, but his pride was stung to the quick, and as Sir John returned to the table, a loud laugh from some of the players, which sounded to his ear like one of derision, made him spring towards them, and presently he heard Sir John's companion say in a coarse voice,

“ You've frightened away the bird you see—I'm afraid I shan't get my money back, if it is on him I reckon for it.”

But the poor bird seemed neither to heed or to understand these words, and the next moment the fowlers, perceived that it had fluttered back to the snare.

“ *Faites votre jeu, faites votre jeu,*” cried Holloway, suddenly recommencing his office as *croupier*, and heaps of gold were once more flung upon the table.

“ *Rouge, noir ! rouge, noir !*” resounded on

every side ; and whose voice was it, that mingled hoarsely amidst the rest ? Sad — sad to relate—it was Louis Raymond's, the widow's only son---her only hope and joy on earth---her carefully, anxiously trained Louis !

But there was one amongst them, whose heart was not wholly hardened in the furnace of iniquity---who feared for him---pitied him---who thought of his own youth---his own fatal career ——— remembered with a bitter pang his own mother's anguish, while the cry of another rung in his ears, “ Save him Harry---save him !” and his heart smote him.

He felt that this entreaty had not been too earnest---that the victim needed indeed a strong arm stretched forth to save him, to snatch him from destruction---he felt that to strike him dead before his feet, that instant, would be an act of mercy, in comparison to allowing him to be that blasted — blighting being --- a Gambler ! Yes, Harry Percy

felt all this, as he happened to cast a glance towards the *rouge et noir* table, and saw Raymond drinking in the poisonous draught, and the thought smote upon his heart, that although *man* might absolve him from the guilt of this young man's proceedings --- he was in fact guilty!---Example --- that awful responsibility!---had he not a heavy reckoning to make upon that score? For a few moments Percy's better nature prevailed; he *must* ---he would save him, cost him what it might.

But alas! the warning voice sounded but in vain---good resolutions vanished, as though they could not exist in an atmosphere so foul. A word was spoken in his ear---a stake proposed---Percy forgot aught else, and was again the reckless gambler --- every feeling of his heart and soul riveted on the turn of a die--- the colour of a card!

Raymond played, till morn faintly dawned

upon many haggard faces, and the lights of the apartment began to sink one by one into their sockets---then as if " 'twas only daylight that made sin," the assembly prepared hastily to disperse.

Raymond did not lodge at that hotel, but at a quieter and cheaper house, and along the damp street, in the pale, grey light of an early October morning, he had to skulk like a culprit---to steal to his chamber, and without a prayer, to throw himself on his bed, there to seek in vain, for the quiet, peaceful sleep, which had rarely before deserted his eyelids.

It is a loathsome sight to watch even the snares by which the poor fly is decoyed into the wily spider's web, and then to note every faint, and fainter struggle --- every quiver of the defenceless victim, as it perishes under the destroyer's grasp. The repulsive task of describing the fall of a human being into the meshes laid by the

designing villany of his fellow men, must be hastened over as quickly as possible---enough however must be related, to exemplify one of the trials of the Gambler's Wife---the most awfully dreadful perhaps, which it pleased her God in His wisdom to lay upon her stricken heart.

The next morning Raymond discovered that he had not only gained his purpose of losing the money he had won, but also a sum to him immense. Had it not been for the remembrance of his uncle's legacy, he would have despaired---as it was, he felt that it was impossible to write to his mother and confess to her the situation in which he had placed himself---he would have braved death, for his mother's sake, but he had not courage to endure the thoughts of her grave and mild reproach---her gentle blame!---he could not bear to pain her. He would play *once more*---win back his money ---and then would fly from further temptation.

Once more! how often are those two simple words, the bait which lures man to destruction. Like the hound which has once tasted the blood of prey, he thirsted to drink of it again; *once more* he played, and deeper and deeper waded into the fatal stream, till, impelled forward by those who had conspired his ruin, he lost his footing and sank never to rise again!

* * * * *

Maud for a few days after her last conversation with the unfortunate young man, was confined to her room by illness, but during that time she failed not to enquire anxiously of her husband, concerning Louis's proceedings; and Percy when he saw the resigned sorrow---the earnest, timid, beseeching look---the trembling entreaties quivering on her lip, would strive in his skilful way to set her mind at

ease on the subject, but when Maud heard that Raymond had not left Ems, she judged it expedient to write to his mother, and warn her of the danger to which she feared her son was exposed.

It was a painful task for our heroine---it was like denouncing her husband, and when he had read the letter, he said with a laugh, in which however there was a sound of bitterness,

“ Very prudent indeed I dare say --- very complimentary to us certainly ; Mrs. Raymond will decidedly think her son has fallen among a gang of thieves.”

Oh the shuddering horror that crept through her veins !

“ You Harry---*you* told me to warn him of some of them,” was her reply in an apologetic tone.

When she next saw young Raymond she repented not the step she had taken. Gracious

Heaven ! was that the fresh, joyous youth, she first beheld at the *table d'hote* — the cheerful, frank, animated boy who had sported with her baby, and revived her spirits by bringing before her eyes, the sight of one being at least, whom care had never clouded—remorse had never touched? Now his cheeks were pale—his brow contracted—his eyes, before bright and sparkling—dim and blood shot!—and then, his trembling hands, his nervous, embarrassed manner!—all told too truly that the poison was doing its work.

In agony she again spoke to her husband, but the subject seemed to annoy him, for he answered impatiently, that it was not her place to watch over the health and conduct of fools——she had written to his mother—what more could be done? For his part, he had annoyances enough of his own, and she seemed to interest herself as much in the affairs of a silly boy, as in those of her husband—the mother would soon arrive and all would then be right.

Again Maud resolved to make a last effort to save him, but Raymond evidently shunned her society — Once when he happened to be with her, she asked him if he had lately heard from his mother. Turning deadly pale, he stammered out some incoherent words, put down the child he was holding in his arms, and rushed from the room. For a week after this, Mrs. Percy sought in vain to see the unhappy youth; till one evening about dusk as she was returning from a walk with her husband, she saw, from the ^edoor of the low roofed pavilion in which the public, but ill attended gambling table is held, two individuals issue arm-in-arm, one of whom a tall, slender figure with hat slouched over his face, started violently as he came suddenly upon them—and Maud beheld the pale face of Louis Raymond, who disengaging himself from his companion hurried on. The other was Holloway, who familiarly greeted them as they passed—Maud groaned in spirit!

CHAPTER VIII.

Hence with thy brewed enchantment foul deceiver !
Hast thou betrayed my credulous innocence
With visored falsehood, and base forgery ?
And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here
With liquorish baits fit to ensnare a brute ?

* * * * *

Oh what noise !

Mercy of Heaven, what hideous noise was that ?

MILTON'S COMUS.

IN due time there came a letter from Mrs. Raymond to Maud, in reply to her warning epistle regarding Louis, and another to her son filled with tender but firm remonstrance. There was one also from his guardian, severe

and unsparing in its blame of his present society and pursuits, and ending by saying, that if he built on the prospect of an addition of fortune to cover his extravagance, his hopes were but as a house of sand, for it seemed very probable that the lawsuit in a few days would be decided, and in favor of his opponent; that much expense had already been incurred in litigating the business, and that in consequence, redoubled economy would be incumbent on his part.

And these dispatches found the unhappy Raymond smarting under the maddening consciousness, that in one month he had lost hundreds. These sums had of course not been paid, and his *kind friends* were earnest in their entreaties, that he would perfectly consult his own convenience—for it was at the uncle's legacy they aimed.

But to the mind of the poor misguided youth, it appeared, that dishonour, disgrace, ruin, and above all, poverty to his mother, must be the

consequence of his error, unless the will was declared in his favor, and to drown his agonising suspense by the excitement of play, seemed his only alternative—he might still win once more, he must risk it yet again! Day and night he was now at the deadly post, the prey of the rapacious sharks of the lowest description, at the common gaming rooms, as well, as of the more aristocratic players of the *Hotel de Russie*; sometimes a brief run of luck raising him up, only to dash him, again, lower into the pit of despair.

At length one morning when he awoke from his feverish, disturbed slumbers, he beheld a letter on his pillow; it was from England, and would decide his fate. With almost frantic eagerness he tore it open—his distended eyes scanned the contents—the room—the bed—all seemed to swim before him.

“It is all over with me,” he almost shrieked, and then he sunk down, and lay in the torpor of utter, hopeless misery during the greater

part of the day, no food passing his parched lips—dim shapes of horror and despair flitting through his mind and brain, which were weakened still more by the effects of the wine and spirits with which he had been wont lately to fortify himself for the agitation of the day.

Rising once in his bed, in a sudden paroxysm of agony, his eye fell upon his father's sword which stood in its case in a corner of the apartment, and with a groan he again sunk back on his pillow.

The weapon which had been wielded in the defence of his country by the most honorable of men, was now in the possession of a wretch who had disgraced himself, and brought misery and poverty on his mother! How could he ever meet that mother's look of sorrow, when he should tell her, that through him, she was beggared—her son dishonored?

A knock at the door roused him, and in a hoarse, hollow voice he said, "Come in!"

It was Sir John Turton, accompanied by the

profligate young Lord C—— and Holloway, who entered, looking with feigned surprise at his haggard appearance. Raymond threw his letter to them, and asked them fiercely, whether they came to glory over the ruin they had caused—or to ask for the money they had *swindled* from him? Holloway commenced a bantering speech, but was silenced by Sir John, who in his soft voice of provoking composure, begged him to leave their young friend, till he was in a state to listen to reason.

The hot-headed Lord C—— however demanded satisfaction for the insult—and Raymond with a bitter smile, and a sudden flash of animation illumining his countenance, pointed to the pistols, also his father's, which hung over the sword, and said he would be happy to meet him where at least they would be *on equal terms*—and then Lord C—— departed with Holloway, and he was left alone with the serpent who would not even now be shaken off. He had his own reasons—he knew that there was

money in the family, and that Raymond now on the eve of being of age, would come into the possession of some thousands on attaining his majority.

Sir John gently rebuked him for what he termed his childish despair, at annoyances, which almost every young man on first entering life was destined, as a matter of course to encounter, and tried to rally him on the folly and imprudence, of allowing the loss of money to discompose him so much as to cause him recklessly to asperse the characters of his friends, and to attribute to design the *freaks of fortune*. "Besides," added Sir John, "the fickle goddess, is so uncertain, that perhaps in *one night* if you laid it on strongly, all might be regained, and on your mother's arrival, she might find you in *statu quo*, only blaming yourself for the childish conduct which made you quarrel with your best friends. Saying this, he laid down notes of considerable amount, and bade him make

use of them that night without scruple—boldness and courage might be the saving of him.

“ Now let us see you come among us this evening like a man, not a weak-spirited boy ; and depend upon my making it all right again with Lord C——, we are all your friends for life.”

“ Yes ! no doubt, after you have drawn me into perdition, and made me a demon like yourselves,” muttered the wretched victim, as the dark and evil one left the room ; then rising, he locked the door, and with reeling brain, and trembling hands, took down the pistols, loaded them, and replaced them in their former position ; then thrusting the bank notes into his pocket, called for wine and refreshments.

In opening a drawer, his mother's picture met his sight—the full, clear eyes were gazing on him ; he staggered back, and threw himself upon a couch, drank glass after glass to drown the remembrance of that glance, and lay in a

sort of stupor awaiting the moment which was to decide his fate.

A note was brought to him, it was from Maud, and as follows:—

“ DEAR MR. RAYMOND,

“ Mr. Percy would have called upon you, but has been confined to his bed all the day, in consequence of indisposition ; but pray come and spend a quiet evening with us. Do not refuse my request, for we have something to propose, which will relieve your mind, from some of the anxiety you are, I fear, enduring. Come early, for little Harry has been pining for his kind friend.

“ Most sincerely yours,

“ MAUD PERCY.”

For an instant, softened feelings filled the heart of Raymond, and tears trickled down his cheeks, but the next, he rang his bell violently, and sent a verbal message that he

could not wait on Mrs. Percy that night. "To-morrow perhaps," he stammered almost incoherently, "he might do himself that pleasure."

* * * * *

Harry Percy had really been ill all day, and Maud saw that his ailment was mental more than bodily—she imagined that he must have been losing very largely, and once as she stood by his bed, on which she had just laid her sleeping child, and he raised his head in order to kiss its little soft cheek, and saw her gazing on his face with a look of such tender anxiety, Harry stretched out his hand affectionately towards her—and then she threw herself on her knees by his side, and forgetful of all, but the overwhelming tenderness which filled her heart, bursting into tears, she cried—

"My own dear Harry, what can I do to help you?"

"Conjure me up a few thousands, my darling," was the careless rejoinder as he turned hastily round and averted his face.

Maud instantly sprung to her feet, crossed the room, unlocked a drawer, and the next moment again turned towards him, and exclaimed, holding open a case of jewels,

“ Harry these are your own, you chid me once for begging you to take them, but you will not now refuse to ease my anxiety.”

“ You are an angel, Maud !” Percy cried in a voice of unfeigned emotion, as he pressed her to his heart, “ an angel, too pure, too lovely, to bless so unworthy a being as your husband.”

This was one of those brief moments, in which, gleams of a nature naturally good, would revive in the breast of the poor young wife, transient glimpses of joy and hope.

“ You are an angel, too good for me !” again exclaimed Percy, “ but it is not of myself I am thinking just now ; I can manage at present to rub on without robbing you, but, Maud, I am really afraid that between them all, that foolish young man Raymond, is ruined !”

Maud clasped her hands in speechless agony.

“ His mother !” she murmured.

“ But do not look so wretched before you hear me out,” continued Percy ; “ I mean, I fear that, unless his uncle’s will is declared in his favor, he will have done badly for himself. If he gets the money, perhaps this bitter lesson may teach him wisdom for the future. On the other hand, if the law decides against him, I am quite determined to make up to him the sum he has lost, in some way or another ; I feel that I have on my conscience no small weight of blame, though how to manage in this business is the question.”

“ Then, Harry,” said Maud, “ these jewels may indeed be put to a use of which we shall never repent. Let us send instantly for the unhappy Louis, and ease his mind of the agony he must be enduring.”

And without waiting for an answer, with trembling eagerness she had written and dispatched the note already mentioned.

Percy took the jewels, knowing that to refuse them, would add to the distress of poor Maud; but he sighed to think, that even had the relinquishment of her ornaments been a sacrifice, how completely as a drop in the sea, would be the advantage derived from their sale.

Maud was seated that night alone in her room, Percy having, by her own concurrence, left her, to make an attempt to draw away the misguided youth from the scene of danger, and bring him to receive the comfort they had in store for him.

But she waited and waited, and yet they came not, and it was nearly two o'clock ere Harry appeared, alone, and with an air of deep annoyance on his countenance. All that he, however, told Maud was, that the youth was most obstinate, and that they must let him play himself out that night. Distressed and anxious, she prepared to

retire to bed. Percy left her, but in a short time returned.

“ Maud,” he said, in an agitated tone, “something *must* be done with this boy—he has lost again—made a scene---insulted half the room---the party have all dispersed, and he is now sitting there alone, looking more dead than alive.”

“ Let us go to him, Harry,” exclaimed Maud rising, “ let us go immediately,” and very pale, but firmly, she walked, leaning on her husband’s arm, down the stairs, along the passage and gallery, now quite deserted, and in which reigned a profound stillness, and soon she found herself at the threshold of the dreaded door.

It was open, but the room presented a very different *coup d’œil*, from that which it had done, when last its interior had opened to her view. The brilliant lights had all been extinguished; one dim candle alone shed its melancholy flame over the apartment, which not a quarter of an hour before, had echoed with sounds

and voices, but now was silent as the grave. In confused disorder on the table were to be seen "here piles of cards, and there the damned dice," and in the midst of all sat the poor victim, Raymond. Yes, there he sat, his arms folded, his head resting on the table before him---motionless! only testifying by the deep groans that at intervals issued from his lips, that he was not like all around him, void of life and feeling.

In what a place for Maud to find herself! This seemed to strike her husband, for he paused and said---

"What a fool I am to bring you here! come, Maud, let us go back, this is not a scene for your eyes."

But withdrawing her arm from his, she replied in a scarcely audible voice, leaning against the door for support---

"No! go to him, tell him I am here, I will wait."

Harry Percy softly, as if for the first time

he dreaded to hear the sound of his own footsteps in such a place, and where he now found himself so strangely situated, approached the spot where Raymond sat, and touched his arm.

“Come, come, my good fellow,” he said in a loud, firm tone, “this is childish!”

The young man raised his head, and fixed his wild, bloodshot eyes fiercely upon his face.

“Gambler!” he cried, “are you too come to taunt me?” and he sprung to his feet.

Harry Percy seized his arm, and rushed to the door.

“Mrs. Percy is there,” he said in a voice of sternness.

The youth started, and gazing round, beheld the white figure of Maud, who stood looking like an angel of light, come to lead a wretch from shades of darkness.

“My mother---my mother,” cried the wretched young man, in an accent of despair, never to be forgotten by the two persons who

heard it, and the next moment he fell senseless on the ground.

* * * * *

“ My own dearest compose yourself—he has recovered his senses, and is tranquil---let him remain so till the morning, and then we will tell him the comfort we have in store for him---the doctor has just left him, and only recommends perfect quiet --- I have ordered Frampton to remain with him.”

These were the words of Harry Percy on entering his wife's room, about two hours after the scene just related—Louis had been removed to the apartment which he had lately occupied in the same hotel.

Scarcely had Percy ceased speaking, when the loud, reverberating sound of a pistol shot, smote upon their ears---the startling noise was succeeded by an interval of awful silence, broken at length by many hurrying steps, and the echo of the quick slamming of doors.

Harry gave one glance at the fixed eyes and bloodless cheeks of Maud, seized the bell, rang a startling peal to summon Lucy to her assistance, and rushed from the room to a scene of horror, impossible to describe.

Enough, that as Percy stood on the threshold of the same apartment, in which, not a minute before, he had left a being, possessed of both soul and breath, he now gazed upon a breathless corpse, whose soul had fled to eternity ! Yes—there, prostrate on the ground, mutilated, terrible to behold—bathed in the life blood his own hand had caused to flow—the fatal weapon still clenched in his convulsive grasp, lay the son of many prayers—of many hopes—the widow's *all*—her bright—her beautiful, her only joy ! And around the murdered youth, stood, with ghastly faces, and eyes starting from their sockets, the hardened in vice---the reckless---the worldlings ! Well might they tremble---well might the lips which had long ceased to pray, murmur an “ Amen ”

to the agonised cry of "Lord have mercy upon me," which burst from the horror-stricken Percy; for might not to each be applied, in answer to the angry demand of avenging Heaven of "Who has done this thing?" the awful response---"Thou art the man!"

"Would that it could be said, that even one amongst them turned from this awful spectacle ---this fearful warning! with the earnest intention, to endeavour "to sin no more," to pray for pardon --- but alas! many, who the following morning left Ems---now become distasteful to them --- fled from it, only to seek to drown all troublesome thoughts of shame, horror and remorse, in fresh scenes of vice, dissipation and folly.

But all are not wholly evil; there were a few who remained with the unhappy suicide to do, all that could be done---to perform the fruitless, though not worthless offices to the dead--- Amongst the number it is needless to say was Harry Percy. On him devolved the painful

task of making every enquiry, which could give a clearer view of the circumstances which led to the catastrophe.

But of what availed the whys and wherefores? There was a doting mother yet to learn that her son was dead—had died, not peacefully breathing his last, but in the darkness of despair—of madness, had rushed into the undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns.

The letter from Mrs. Raymond, received by her son on the last morning of his life was found—its contents were these few lines—

“ I return to you my own dear boy, bringing with me nothing but my earnest love unchanged!—but I will not say that I feel no regret, that circumstances have turned out as they have done, for that would be unnatural, and I have not time now to moralise on the uncertainty and peril of riches ;—I ought to be only too grateful, that with common prudence on our part, we are not likely to struggle

with poverty. But my dearest son, in whatever state of life we may be placed, let us pray *to be contented*—Almost as soon as you receive this, I shall hope to be with you.”

This letter was directed to Gottingen, it having been supposed that the young man had returned to that place, according to the command of his guardian. Tidings of the sad catastrophe had been dispatched, in the hope of preventing the poor mother from proceeding to Ems, but this intention was unhappily frustrated.

On the afternoon of the second day after the direful event, Harry Percy paced to and fro the darkened chamber of Maud. Haggard were his cheeks, and troubled was his brow.

On a couch lay the poor young wife, her hands clasped tightly together, and with that expression of settled horror on her countenance, and torturing thought in her eyes, plainly telling that she had sustained a shock which had shaken her very soul.

But now she seemed to think more of her husband's suffering than her own, for her eyes anxiously followed his footsteps ; and ever and anon she would speak to him in a low voice of gentle tenderness, begging him to take some of the food, that stood untasted on the table, or to lie down and seek for the sleep which had not visited his eyelids for the last two nights.

All was quiet around them—the awful presence of the dead within its walls, seemed to have hushed even the busy sounds of the Hotel---every footstep seemed to tread lightly and reverentially. One cheerful sound alone was heard, the merry shout, the baby glee of little Harry in his neighbouring nursery ; but for the first time these sounds grated painfully on their ears, and it was a relief to both parents when the child went out for a walk. He had been brought in to see them before he set out, and it was with a bitter pang that Maud heard him lisp the name of mother. She thought of him who had been loved as dearly, of the mother

who never again would hear that sweet sound pronounced by her child, and with a shudder she pressed her own darling to her heart and turned away. Harry Percy too, somewhat impatiently kissed the little boy, and his face was very pale, when he again commenced his perambulations.

Thus it was, when suddenly a *chaise de poste* was heard rattling swiftly down the long street, and stop before the door of the Hotel. Percy cast a careless glance through the half closed shutters at the vehicle, and was turning away, when the tones of a well remembered voice, seemed to freeze the blood in his veins, and he stood as if rooted to the spot, a faintness overspreading his heart. A few moments more, and a hurried step was heard approaching the chamber. There was a quick, sharp knock at the door, and without waiting for an answer, Lord George Damer, who throughout the late dreadful affair had acted with the utmost good feeling, entered, exclaiming,

“ For God’s sake, Percy, come here directly—this poor unfortunate woman has arrived. She’s asking for her son---knows nothing of what has happened---is totally unprepared---what is to be done? none of the others will go near her---pray come !”

At that instant, the clear, cheerful voice of Mrs. Raymond was heard on the stairs, begging to be shewn the way to her son’s room. Maud sprang to her feet, and then, with a faint cry of horror, threw herself on her knees, burying her face in the couch.

Percy looked at Lord George, with a blank air of consternation.

“ Damer,” he said, “ I can’t do it---quite impossible. But, gracious Heaven, if they are not taking her to the room !—She is going upstairs,” and both gentlemen rushed from the apartment.

Maud remained kneeling, her head raised, her hands clasped, whilst her bloodless lips moved in an agonised appeal to heaven ; till

every object around seemed to vanish from her sight, every sound from her ears—and then followed an instant of motionless suspense, but at length there came a sound—

“A sound—a voice—a shriek—
A long, loud shriek and silence.”

It was no common cry of agony and horror! There was in it something supernaturally awful, and well might it be so, for with that cry, the strong intellect—the fine mind, was destroyed, and reason fled for ever from its high seat.

Maud could not know the dreadful fact at that moment and she did not hear the curse--the fearful curse the frantic mother invoked on the destroyers of her son, but she heard enough to cause her to call aloud for mercy!

Yes!—when by the looks of those who followed her, striving to draw her away from the fatal spot she was approaching, suspicions were awakened in her mind—like a lioness in search of her young, led by strange instinct to the very room, the wretched mother had

started from them, and stood by the corpse of her child---lifted the covering from his face---and then---But we will not paint that scene—

“ The ark of grief
Let us not touch, presumptuous.”

Time passed almost unconsciously over the stunned senses of Maud, after that awful sound had smote on her ear; she moved not, she scarcely breathed, she even seemed not to hear when the door opened, till on her name being pronounced, she raised her eyes, and beheld her husband, who sank into a chair, covered his face with his hands, and groaned aloud.

Maud tottered towards him, and with a wild expression in her eyes, and in a voice of hollow, supplicating anguish exclaimed, “ Harry---Harry, is not this enough?”—and fainted at his feet.

CHAPTER IX.

“ The love I offered long ago
Is but matured by time,
As tendrils round their chosen bough
Cling closer as they climb ;
Then am I not a lover still
In heart and soul the same,
As when I sought thy bower first
And learnt to breathe thy name.”

HAYNES BAYLEY.

To one of the “ stately homes of England,” we must now transport our readers, to the mansion of the Earl of Balfour, in Warwickshire, where in the merry Christmas time, a gay party had

assembled to meet the lovely *fiancée* of the heir of that noble house.

And now methinks I hear the readers say, "We trust then we have done for awhile with tears and woes, with sorrow and sighing—we weary of dismalities!" Would that it could be so!

"Misfortune" it is said "cuts with a two-edged sword," and true it is, for the experience of many will have taught them, that when once the grim visaged monster affliction, shews its face in a circle, like a pestilence, its infectious breath seems to spread death and misery around. It is seldom satiated with a single victim. We have undertaken the task of relating the history of a family, whom Providence, in His wisdom, had ordained should drink largely of the cup of sorrow. And let it not be supposed that we are needlessly exaggerating descriptions of misfortunes. The happiness of mortal men may indeed, be too highly coloured, too vividly described, for in the midst of the utmost joy,

there must ever be a shade *of darkness---no lot on earth is unchequered by disappointment; earth would be too like heaven were it not so. Grief is the natural portion of all below; we were born to sorrow, the curse of Adam is upon us, and his descendants feel it hourly---daily. It is therefore nearer to truth to describe grief, than perfect happiness, which never exists but for the briefest moment, save in fiction.

Lord Percival's time of probation was over; he had been comforted in its tediousness by a promise from his father, that under his own roof his son should receive the welcome of his beloved, and hear from her own lips, the words which were to crown his happiness. And there he had found Mr. Sutherland and May---the latter already cherished as a daughter, by his parents---what cloud could now dim the bright horizon of his future life?

In the library of Carlton Hall, a few days after his arrival, were assembled the Earl, Mr.

Sutherland, and Lord Percival. An audience had been requested by the future father-in-law of the young nobleman, to converse on matters of business, relating to his daughter's prospects.

He knew, Mr. Sutherland said, that it was the general belief, that on his death she would be his heiress ! he considered it his duty to undeceive Lord Balfour and his son, before matters proceeded farther. The estate of Sutherland Manor was settled irrevocably on another heir—but still May would be most richly endowed.

The conversation lasted some time, and when, ready equipped for a walk, May and her future sister-in-law peeped into the room, to ask how long they were to be kept waiting for their companion, she appeared to have lost no ground in the favor of either her lover or his father, by Mr. Sutherland's communication ; on the contrary, she received a most affectionate salute from the somewhat reserved and stately Earl.

“My good friend here,” said his lordship looking towards Mr. Sutherland, “has been making one more attempt to keep you to himself. Come in, Arthur,” for another face appeared at the door, “come in; Percival has discovered that this fair lady is not an heiress, so he will give her up to you.”

“Oh no, papa,” cried Lady Susan, a merry little maiden of eight years old, “we must have May for our sister, and cousin Arthur can marry Cecilia, and then he will be our brother.”

All laughed, or strove to laugh at the speech of both father and daughter—but the colour which rushed to the cheeks of some, and forsook those of others, might have plainly told, that though unintentionally, the words were not spoken quite *apropos*.

The youthful group sallied forth—the blushing Lady Cecilia leaning on her pale cousin’s arm, but scattering her smiles and gay words on other gentlemen of the party.

Behind them sauntered the lovers, and at

first they both seemed thoughtfully observing one of the pedestrians before them.

“Yes ! it grieves me much,” said May sadly, in answer to some comment of Lord Percival’s “it grieves me much to see him looking so far from happy. I hoped, time would heal his deep wound, but I think, I never beheld him so depressed as now. I have not seen him very lately, and it strikes me he is much altered,” and the tears sprung to her eyes, “though still kind and affectionate, he no longer appears to enjoy our society ; indeed he at first refused to meet us here.”

For a moment Lord Percival was silent, but then with a grave smile he said, fixing his eyes on her face,

“Are you sure, dear May, it is from that first wound he is suffering---may he not have received a more recent one ?”

May answered not immediately, but the red blood gradually died her cheek to crimson, and evasively, she said with a smile,

“ I had some hopes that your pretty sister might have made some impression on his frozen heart. I wonder it does not warm under the influence of her sunny smiles.”

“ I marvel not at all, May, if my suspicions are true---and tell me, dearest, sincerely, how this idea has arisen in your mind ?”

“ Why really Lord Percival——”

“ Lord Percival ! May, when do you intend to drop that formal title ?”

“ Well, Percival, or Francis, if you like it better---why will you always force me to speak such plain, disagreeable facts ? Once you made me humiliate myself by confessing that I loved in vain---and now you wish me to——” she paused her smile vanishing, and her cheek growing pale.

“ To confess that you in your turn are now loved in vain !” added Lord Percival.

May was silent and bent her eyes to the ground.

“ May, I would give the world if it were not

so," he continued vehemently, "I thought my happiness was without a cloud---I knew not so dark a shadow was about to encompass it."

"You take this too seriously, Francis," said May, endeavouring to smile, "and I hope and trust you are mistaken—I should indeed be miserable if I thought that I was the cause, of giving one pang, to that noble, generous heart—but if I have done so, it has been most unintentionally—most innocently!"

"I believe it May—you are in no way to blame—but I see it all clearly now—I suspected it from the first, and shall I tell you, dearest, what I did? you must forgive me if you deem it rather an exaggerated act of generosity—and it makes me tremble now, to think of what it might have deprived me—still it has eased my mind from a weight of self-reproach. After the frank confession you made me, of how your heart had once inclined with regard to Arthur, an idea flashed across my mind concerning his feelings towards you

—I went to him—nay, do not look so alarmed

—I did not tell him your secret—but——”

“Offered to give me up to him!” replied May laughing, but at the same time looking up in his face with glistening eyes.

“Not quite that,” returned Percival, “I merely asked him how it was, that living so long under the same roof—becoming day after day more acquainted with your perfections, he could have failed to love you—he told me, *he did love you*—I was petrified—but” he added, “who could fail to love her? but if you mean Percival, why did I never seek to make her my wife—I will tell you—In the first place—I would never offer so broken a heart to any woman, especially to her—secondly, I would not put it into the power of the world to say,—‘It was the heiress he courted, so he has conveniently transferred his affections from one sister to the other—therefore Percival be happy—take the

treasure you have gained, and never think that by so doing you have robbed me of it.' ”

We know not what were the feelings which rushed through the heart of May as she walked on in silence, or what emotion called forth the sigh which reached the tenacious ear of Lord Percival.

“ And now,” he hastily continued in trembling, agitated tones, “ and now, May, you are not the heiress he supposed—and you sigh as if—as if—” his voice faltered and he paused.

May raised her clear eyes with a searching expression to his face.

“ Lord Percival,” she gravely said, “ am I then to think that your father's words, spoken by him in jest, were true—that——”

“ May ! you cannot believe aught of me so base—so ridiculous,” exclaimed her lover.

“ Not so base---so ridiculous and suspicious as that which you entertain of me,” replied May in an indignant tone.

“ Dearest forgive me, it was but for a moment---I feared that sigh——”

“ A happy life I shall lead Lord Percival, if every sigh I breathe is to be thus interpreted. Ah ! I may well sigh,” she continued with a sweet smile, for she saw sufficient contrition depicted on her lover’s countenance to allay her just anger, “ I fear you will make a very jealous husband ; --- but we will no longer dwell on this subject ; only once for all, dear Francis, let me assure you, that it was from no feeling of pique, or self-compulsion that I consented to be yours. Pride and shame indeed helped me to cast another from my heart, but that your chains wound round it, was your own doing. Francis, I have set my heart on seeing Cecilia mistress of beautiful Sutherland Manor !”

“ In what way ?” said Percival looking surprised.

“ ¹³ Arthur’s wife——but perhaps you do

not know that my dear father has settled it upon him !”

“ I concluded it would devolve upon your sister,” he replied.

“ No---no,” continued May shaking her head sadly, “ Arthur will some day be master of the Manor, and will assume his rightful name of Sutherland---a patent is to be taken out immediately to that effect—and we must have a ‘ Lady Cecilia Sutherland !’ See, she is making him laugh, at one of her lively sallies—he looks quite happy again--I wish Lord Henry Clifford would not put himself so continually in the way—but I have no fears for Arthur, if he will only exert himself a little.”

Before they returned home, Lord Percival sued for the fulfilment of a promise, May had that morning made—to fix a day for their marriage ; but she playfully told him that he again deserved punishment for his sins—she had a great mind to banish him for another six months, but she would be lenient, and only

postpone the fulfilment of her promise till the next evening. "That is to say," she added, as she looked up affectionately into his face, "if you come home safe from hunting, but you really keep me in a perpetual fright on such occasions, from your reckless riding."

"And if I return to you," he replied in a tone of deep tenderness, pressing her hand to his lips, "you will fix the day to be mine?"

"Till death us do part," added May in the same tone, lifting her tearful eyes to her lover's face.

CHAPTER X.

“ It matters not at what hour of the day
The righteous fall asleep ; death cannot come
To him untimely, who is fit to die ;
The less of this cold world, the more of Heaven ;
The briefer life, the earlier immortality.”

MILMAN.

BRIGHT shone the sun the ensuing morning on that most cheerful exhilarating of scenes—a meeting of the hounds! A slight frost in the night had been followed by a genial thaw, and glittering drops were trickling fast from

the leafless branches---sparkling like diamonds on the blades of grass of the spacious lawn of Carlton Hall.

From far and near, crowds of horsemen had assembled in their gay scarlet coats. Sylvan sounds of the chase resounded in the clear air. The bugle of the well ordered pack — the neighing and snorting of the impatient steeds as they stood pawing the ground and tossing their graceful heads---the cries and smacking of the whip of the whipper in, as he rode to and fro, calling the unruly ones to order---and then the long line of equipages filled with the young, the beautiful, the noble---beaming with smiles, their happy voices mingling with the ruder sounds around!

One was there, who seemed especially to claim the observation and admiration of all beholders, for she was known to be the bride-elect of the hero of the scene---and well worthy of admiration did she appear, as she

stood erect in the barouche, her beautiful face radiant with smiles---her soft, hazel eyes glancing with animated pleasure on the scene before her --- meeting with gentle, frank affection those of Lord Percival, who was by her side holding his fiery hunter by the bridle, gaily answering all her questions regarding the lively scene she now beheld for the first time.

There were other gentlemen around the carriage, which was also occupied by Lady Cecilia and her too pretty little sisters. The Countess was in another, with some of her noble guests she was about to escort to the scene of action --- the throwing off of the hounds!

Amongst the equestrians, was Mr. Sutherland, who on horseback stood by his daughter and her betrothed, and his usually sad countenance seemed to have caught the air of cheerfulness which breathed around him.

The spectator who seemed the least infected by the general exhilaration, was the stately, commanding looking young officer, who was reining in his horse on the other side of the carriage, in order to listen to some gay remark of the fair Lady Cecilia, by which she had arrested his progress, as he was gallopping past. It failed however to do more than produce a very slight curl of his mustachioed lip, and removed not the melancholy expression of his handsome face, as he cast a hurried glance at the opposite side of the barouche ; and then allowing his horse to spring on, he joined a group of horsemen at a distance, making way for Lord Henry Clifford who willingly took his place by the carriage.

A rumour was afloat that day, that a marriage was on the *tapis*, between Captain Balfour and his cousin, the Earl's eldest daughter---but many who observed them together, disbelieved the report.

But at length the signal was given, the huntsman sounded a loud blast --- and on moved the gay procession down the noble approach, along the broad high road, till they reached, the cover, situated on a common, over which the hounds soon dispersed, sniffing the ground with eager impatience, in search of their intended prey, while sportsmen were hastening on, to gain a convenient position for the expected rush.

During the drawing of the cover, Lord Percival was stationed by the side of his beloved, and a countenance of more happiness was seldom beheld. His hand was still resting on the carriage, when Balfour rode up to propose some change of position.

“ Arthur ! take care of Percival,” said May with a gentle smile, “ bring him back safe.”

“ I will do my best, May,” answered Arthur in a tone of forced gaiety, “ but

unless you give his bridle into my hands, I fear I shall not have much control over his movements—I think however you may rely on his taking care of himself—he has a motive for so doing,” he added, with a sad smile.

“ You are right Arthur,” replied Percival, “ trust me for taking care of myself to-day—I carry a talisman with me,” he continued lowering his voice, as he bent over May and pointed to a ring she had given him that morning.

“ Somebody must give cousin Arthur a ring,” cried Lady Susan, “ somebody must take care of Arthur.”

“ No, no !” exclaimed Balfour hastily, in a would be careless tone, “ never mind me ; don’t you know, that nought is never in danger and who——”

“ Arthur !” interrupted May in a voice of grave but gentle reproach, as she fixed her soft eyes upon his face—and he stopped abruptly in his sentence.

The next moment both the gentlemen darted on. The cry of the hounds was heard—the loud, ringing sound of the horn! *They had found---*and with one accord, on dashed the whole concourse of horsemen, soon leaving far behind, though still in sight, the high road on which the ladies were waiting.

“Do you see him Cecilia?” asked May straining her eyes after the flying red coats, diminishing fast in the distance.

“Who---Percival?—yes, there he is as usual, the very first—now he has just leapt that brook. And is not that Arthur by his side?—yes, and now he is before Percival—you see May he is obeying your orders, and taking care of my brother.”

The whole hunt was now lost sight of, by a sudden turn made by reynard, and the carriages were directed by the Countess's experienced coachman to turn off by a short cut, in the direction the hounds had taken, for the chance of again falling in with them; and after

about half an hour's drive, the ladies ears were once more greeted, by the welcome sounds, and poor reynard swept by, close behind the wheels of the barouche, followed shortly afterwards by the pack in full cry and the foremost of the sportmen, among whom was Lord Percival, who gaily flourished his whip, in answer to the waving of the handkerchiefs which greeted him as he passed. In another moment his fiery horse had borne him far from their view, rapidly over a hedge, which in consequence of its extreme height seemed to be avoided by his companions, who were evidently seeking for a less perilous egress.

“Cecilia ! do you think Percival intended to take that leap ?” said May, who had made a faint exclamation of alarm on beholding it, “did it not look as if the horse were running away ?”

“Oh no, dear May,” replied Lady Cecilia,

“you do not know Percival’s boldness on horseback—he can sit a leap which no one else can manage.”

A few minutes and the pack was again in view, but only followed by a very few hunters. There was an exclamation from the servants, who standing up on the box, were endeavouring to ascertain the cause of the delay, and one of the footmen had even sprung to the ground, and rushed towards the hedge.

“I fear there has been some accident, my lady,” was the answer of the coachman to the eager enquiry of Lady Cecilia, and his face was deadly pale. Almost at the same instant, several horsemen were seen galloping past them at a furious rate, towards a farm house which was in sight.

The Countess was heard in a quick, agitated voice, giving orders to drive on, and her equipage had set off, when suddenly another horseman was seen rapidly approaching, who, on

perceiving them, motioned to the servants to stop.

It was Mr. Sutherland. The instant May could distinguish her father's face, she clasped her hands murmuring, "Good God!"---she felt prepared for tidings of horror.

He stopped first at the Countess's carriage, and in another moment May saw it roll past them, Lady Balfour supported in the arms of her companions.

"Dear Lady Cecilia compose yourself—God grant it may not be so bad," she next heard, amidst exclamations of agony from the sisters.

"Our brother—our darling brother! will he die?" cried the little girls.

But no sound issued from May's lips—her head was on her father's bosom—his arms were tenderly encircling her—he took a smelling bottle from her hand and held it to her nose, but thrusting it from her, she started up exclaiming,

“ Let me go to him Papa—oh take me—take me to him !”

“ No—no my dear child—he is going home, and then—then you shall see him,” and giving his horse to a servant, he entered the carriage and returned with the weeping girls to Carlton Hall ; May leaning on his shoulder, now pale and motionless—now springing up in horror, with eager, frantic enquiries concerning the unhappy Percival.

Well may be imagined the consternation now pervading the whole family, when it is related, that the horse of this much and justly valued young nobleman, over which it is supposed, he must have lost all command in attempting to leap an immense height, fell back and rolled over its unfortunate rider, who on being extricated from beneath the animal, was found to have sustained the most serious injuries.

He was however quite sensible, and even

managed to convey a wish that he might be carried home instead of to the farm house as was proposed ; and accordingly, a shutter being procured, he was borne gently and tenderly towards the Hall, his afflicted young brothers, two fine youths of sixteen and fourteen, and his still more agonized cousin Arthur Balfour riding by his side ; slowly and sadly following those friends who had been dispatched on different errands, some to apprise the Earl of the unhappy event. When they approached the mansion, forming a procession so different from that which so short a time before he had watched depart, the agonized father stood on the threshold to receive it, and his eyes fell on the altered features of his beloved son, who, with a wan smile, stretched out his hand towards him. The unhappy Earl exclaimed in accents of despair—

“ My boy—my poor, dear boy !”

At Carlton Hall throughout that weary day there was all the agony of suspense which at-

tends alternate hope and fear, almost worse to endure than the certainty of evil. While life remains the human heart will cling to hope, and in spite of all they hoped, though little prospect was held out, by the surgeons, of the possibility of the young man surviving the serious internal injuries he had sustained.

The disposition of Lord Percival, always amiable and gentle in his days of health, shone forth with brighter lustre in this trying hour. It seemed his anxious endeavour to strive, as much as possible, to spare the feelings of those around him, refraining from giving vent to murmurs or expressions that would mark the extent of his sufferings. He, however, insisted upon hearing from his medical attendants their real opinion of his case, and with calm resignation, listened as they pronounced his doom.

The dying bed of this young nobleman was indeed an example of how those who walk beneath the bright and dazzling sun of prosperity,

may yet preserve within their hearts, that pure light, which, when the sun is growing dim and waxing faint, can alone guide them through the dark valley of the shadow of death. Still it could hardly be without some keen pangs, that he felt himself rapidly departing from all the earthly bliss which a moment before had been within his grasp; and Arthur Balfour, who never left his cousin's side, heard him once murmur in a tone of keener agony than any bodily torture had been able to call forth, "May, my own sweet love, must I leave you?"

The Countess, on recovering from the first effects of the terrible shock, had also flown to the chamber of her beloved son, and had never quitted her post. The father had not fortitude to do so, nor courage to behold his noble heir, prostrated, suffering. In a state bordering on distraction, he awaited in a neighbouring room, the different bulletins brought to him from moment to moment.

It was about five o'clock in the afternoon when the invalid requested that he might see his brothers and sisters, and one by one the afflicted young people were brought in, and pressed in his arms. Then a change came over his countenance, and he lay for awhile as if he were preparing his mind for a still more agitating interview.

The Countess and Arthur read his thoughts, and though they knew it must be—yet they awaited with dread, the moment when he should ask for May; they both feared the effects of such a scene. At length Lord Percival spoke, he begged to be left alone for a time, with his cousin,

“It will not be for very long, dear mother,” he said, “but what I have to say concerns Arthur alone.”

The Countess left the room. In about half an hour she heard the door of her son's apartment open, and was hastening to return to his side, when Balfour, whom she met at the

threshold, murmured in a scarcely audible voice, "Not yet, my dear aunt, not quite yet."

She gazed enquiringly on his face, which exhibited traces of emotion, telling too well the painful nature of the conversation.

"Are you going for May?" she said in trembling accents.

He bowed his head.

Murmuring in suppressed agony, "Poor, poor girl!" the miserable mother clasped her hands, and raising her eyes to heaven, began pacing to and fro the vestibule, whilst Arthur proceeded on his sad mission. Shortly after, the Countess beheld him again appear, and leaning on his arm the affianced bride of the dying Percival—her step faltering—her head bent down upon her bosom. They entered the room, and the door closed upon them.

We will not describe the meeting; when the first agony was over, Lord Percival entreated May, whose sobs of irrepressible anguish

echoed through the chamber to calm herself, and listen to what he had to say. He took her trembling hands within his—pressed them to his heart, as she knelt by his bed, and motioned Arthur to approach.

“ May !” he then said, “ I have bequeathed to Arthur a precious treasure ; it will soothe my dying moments, if you will promise to fulfil my wishes, for it is in your power alone—you will not refuse me, my own dearest ?”

“ Refuse *you*, Francis !”

“ Then, May, promise, that the love you vowed but yesterday was mine, ‘ till death should us part,’ shall one day be his, Arthur’s ; he will love you as tenderly as I would have done, as carefully shield you from the storms of this world ; to none other would I confide you thus—but I know he is worthy—truly worthy to possess you. I know what you would say,” he continued, as May, overpowered by the violence of her emotion, vainly attempted to speak, “ but he will not ask you, dearest to

forget me—he loves me too—and when time shall have allayed your grief—he will be all to you that I would have been—and in your restored happiness, you will talk of poor Percival whom you both loved—and you will think with feelings of satisfaction, that you have fulfilled his dying wishes—his earnest hope. Arthur, take her hand—she will not refuse me.”

Arthur fervently, but in silence, pressed the cold, passive hand that was placed in his.

Lord Percival seemed satisfied, and he drew from his finger the ring May had given him—lifted it to his lips, then held it towards Arthur. He had become too weak for more words, and lay silently gazing on May, whom Arthur had placed in a chair by his side. Suddenly he motioned to him to bend down, and whispered in his ear—

“Arthur, I must now draw my thoughts from this world, and if I look on her longer—I shall wish to live.—Take her—take her—call back my mother—I must pray—”

Arthur approached the statue-like figure of May, and proposed that she should retire, telling her that he feared her presence was too agitating for Percival.

She immediately rose, leant on the arm he held out to her; but the next moment threw herself on her knees by the bed, crying in a choked voice, "I will be calm—very calm—do not bid me leave you.'

"Dearest, you come between my heart and heaven--this must not be—go—and pray that I may depart in peace—we shall meet again where there are no more partings—yet, stay one moment, once more let me look upon that face!"

He gazed for a moment earnestly on her, then released her hand.

* * * * *

It was at midnight that a knock at the door caused Mr. Sutherland to rise from the chair in which he was seated, by his poor child's bedside, and leave the room. He returned to

break to her that all was over, and the morning's light shone upon a house of sorrow, and upon the cold, pale form of the young and gallant Percival.

“ Yesterday
Song was upon his lips,
And sunshine seemed to dwell
Wher'er he moved—the welcomed and the blessed.”

CHAPTER XI.

“ Oh he that could reveal
What life had taught that chastened heart to feel,
Might speak indeed of woman's blighted years,
And wasted love and vainly bitter tears.”

MRS. HEMANS.

MORE than a year has passed since we quitted the abode over which death had waved its dark withering sceptre ; blighting the young, the noble in the strength and beauty of his years ; leaving many to weep over and bewail his un-

timely fate, and many to exclaim in bitterness of spirit,

“ Is there any sorrow like unto our sorrow.”

And truly a bereavement such as we have related is of all afflictions the most startling—the loss of one on whom we have seen many a hope and prayer fulfilled—the future giving promise of still further fruit, whose bark of life was just launched, on smooth sparkling waters, laden with rich and precious treasures, wafted by the gale of honor, virtue and prosperity—to see it suddenly sink engulfed for ever from our sight, is indeed a fearful blow ! But there are those who have had to learn that there is a greater sorrow, a sight more heart rending. To see a “ pleasant vessel” glide away in all its beauty and perfection, and return shattered and broken, its loveliness departed, its sails torn and drooping, fluttering in the treacherous winds, which before had so proudly swelled them, its treasures wasted on the ocean which restor-

eth not again. Yes, we may live and learn, to feel there is that, far worse for those we love than death. It is the living death, the dying daily, that withering of the heart "like grass," the bleeding of the wounds from the broken reeds on which the victim leant only to be pierced, the agonising spectacle of a disappointed, blighted, breaking heart.

She to whom we return felt all this too well. On hearing of the sad event, she had wept, but envied the fate of one who had departed in the fulness of joy, loving and beloved, never destined to feel the woe of a rifled, sickened heart, a crushed and broken spirit.

Clouds had darkly thickened round the gambler's wife since we left her, although truly the sky of her horizon then appeared sufficiently obscure ; but there had shone through the gloom, which succeeded the dreadful catastrophe of young Raymond's death, a gleam of hope and comfort.

Her husband for awhile seemed awakened to

a sense of the reckless, faulty career he was pursuing, but the impression soon again faded away. * His hour was not yet come, and the cup of the young wife's sorrow was far from being drained—its bitter dregs were yet to be tasted!

We will not detail the particulars of her life during the past year, how the melting away of the sunbeam of hope rendered the succeeding darkness still more gloomy; when it is said that Paris became the resort of Percy, the readers may easily guess the sequel.

Let a hungry tiger loose among a crowd, and expect it not to destroy, rather than send a Gambler into a such a hot-bed of destruction as Paris then was, and expect him not to play, not to join in all the dissipation which springs up in it. So Maud found to her cost—from that time the crisis of his reckless course of life approached with giant paces, and during this last winter Harry Percy had even been

compelled to retreat to the then deserted watering place Baden.

A winter of misery it had been to Maud ; she had now to endure a novel grievance, the realities of comparative poverty ; but it was not this, that bowed her soul with grief ; no, for she would have worked, starved, borne all cheerfully and willingly, could she have only had her husband to turn to even in thought for support and comfort—but to see him forsake her, and his child, and strive to drown his care in the dregs of dissipation, which Baden at that time afforded, was withering indeed to her poor heart.

Of late she had begun to feel the havoc that care and sorrow were bringing on her spirits and health, assisted by a winter's residence in a spot, which, from its fogs and exhalations, is insufferable to some constitutions. But her husband seemed not to be aware of this. He was ever received by her with smiles of welcome, with the same kind cheerfulness.

She would not deprive herself of, alas! the too little portion of his society which she now enjoyed, by complaints or fears on her own account, and though often she had to listen to the fretful, discontented murmurings, that his health was failing, his spirits breaking, she never spoke of her own sufferings of mind and body—her tears were shed in secret—her complaints poured out to Him alone, who despises not the sighing of the sorrowful and contrite heart.

Poor Maud, wonderful was the love which bound her so firmly to the erring Percy, and beautiful the feeling. There is no latitude we would not give to the affection of a wife towards her husband, even when degenerating into weakness we cannot help respecting it—when it clings to worthlessness, it loses not its loveliness. The love that is pledged at the altar is intended to be stamped indelibly on the heart. Nothing ought to have power to efface the impression. The lips that have pronounced

the words, "*for better and for worse*," have also sworn to be faithful without any reservation, "*until death us do part*," and never, in our opinion, does a woman's character shine forth so resplendently, as when she clings with "the tenacity of the ivy to the broken wall" to the fortunes of an unfortunate, nay, even a faulty husband, when through neglect, unkindness, unfaithfulness, *her* heart remains unchanged—her love still ready for him to claim, panting, hoping, for one word of tenderness, one kind look to bid her hope that still he may be hers again.

A short time before the present period, troubles of a pecuniary nature had thickened around the gambler, and his wife. The rich heiress, nurtured in a home of luxury, had often to meet the dark looks, the harsh, rude words of those who came to demand their due---the proud, the beautiful Maud, with sinking heart, and trembling limbs, her noble boy by her side,

had often to sue for patience, for mercy ; and Harry Percy, though in some way or another, he always managed to satisfy for a time importunate creditors, determined suddenly to change his residence, to one of those secluded spots in the beautiful environs of Baden, where Mrs. Percy would be less liable to meet with the annoyances to which she was now subjected.

And there, though but two or three miles from the capital, our heroine found herself in the month of March, in as lonely and complete a solitude as though she had been far from the haunts of men. Once, how she would have revelled in the beauteous country that surrounded her ; how often had she longed to fly with her husband to a peaceful spot like this, and panted for the refreshing sight of dark woods, deep valleys, and picturesque hamlets. But time brings great changes. The mind must be at ease to appreciate the beauties of nature ; care casts a gloom over the very

vision; every object looks dark and frowning to the eyes that sorrow has dimmed—

“ With shadows from the past we fill,
The happy woodland shades,
And a mournful memory of the dead,
Is with us in the glades,
And our dream—like fancies and the wind
On echo's plaintive tone,
Of voices, and of melodies, and of silvery laughter gone.”

But although Maud felt all this powerfully, the dreadful solitude of the heart—there was still ever one sunbeam dancing in her dark path—one bird-like voice sounding in her ear---one being who had never caused her aught but unalloyed delight---her child---her little Harry, who daily increasing in beauty, and with intellect beyond his age, was winding himself with fearful intensity around his mother's heart.

How often in her sad and solitary hours, when her feeling of loneliness and depression became almost unsupportable, whilst the little creature sported before her in all his fearless

glee, did she stretch out her arms towards him, and say in all the bitterness of a wounded spirit—

“Love me, Harry—love me—love your poor, poor mother,” and the child would instantly cease from his wild glee and fly to her arms.

Enfolded in his little, firm embrace, her overcharged heart would be relieved by the pouring forth of her pent up tears on his innocent head, and the boy would lift up his beautiful eyes to her face, and say—

“Do not cry, dear, darling mama—Harry love you very, very much.”

“Yes!” she would again exclaim, “love me—always—love me, Harry, or poor mama will die.”

The evening on which we return to poor Maud, a similar scene had occurred, but so excited had become the state of her nerves that her agitation had quite overpowered her, and at length the poor child was terrified at wit-

nessing the violence of her emotion, and sobbed and wept, as bitterly as his mother.

Blaming herself for the weakness, she had, with an effort, calmed her own agitation, and endeavoured to allay that of her darling; and at length, by caresses and playful words, succeeded, and the little creature lay quietly on her knee, his head resting on her bosom.

At length Lucy, faithful Lucy, who had left behind a brighter fate, and in all Mrs. Percy's troubles, had been the greatest comfort she possessed, entered to take her young master to bed, but the child had refused to leave his mother, passing his arm round her waist, he clung to her, and would not go.

Maud looked at Lucy with a sad smile as if to say, I cannot send him from me, I have so many weary hours to spend in loneliness; and it seemed as though Lucy well understood her feelings, and sympathised in them, for tears started to her eyes, as she gazed upon the scene before her, and in a choking voice said, that she

would return again in a short time for the little boy.

“ Yes, I will sing my Harry one little song, and then I am sure he will go with dear, good Lucy,” and she sung to him till gradually his white eyelids became heavy and he slept, breathing

“ Like a lone voiced dove on her gentle breast.”

Her songs had been snatches of those she had been wont to sing of old—some she had never sung since she had left her home—but now as she lay reclining in the dim twilight, in that half dreamy state, which the exhaustion of her recent emotion had produced, visions of the past seemed floating round her, and after the little boy was taken away, the strains ever and anon gushed forth, vibrating on the heart of poor Lucy, as she sat weeping in a neighbouring apartment. With what thrilling pathos she chaunted these words—

“ Oh the home of my childhood is graven on my heart,
From its streams, from its wild woods how could I depart,
To that home oh restore ! or let me ! let me die.”

Her voice gradually died away, she closed her eyes and slumbered ; and now, nought was heard save the gentle evening breeze of early spring, waving the branches outside the window near which she reclined.

But ere her voice ceased, it had reached other ears than those of the few inmates of the house. Even that of one, who with slow, languid steps, was approaching towards it ; and the mournful pathos of its tone, awoke a pang of painful feeling in his breast ; and well it might, well too might a startling stab of remorse strike his heart at what he beheld on pausing before the lattice window of the cottage.

His thoughts but a few moments before had been absorbed on himself, and in the harassing cares and annoyances which his own sin and folly had brought upon him, as if he alone were the sufferer ! He was returning home—his resources gone, to vent his disappointment, and pour his complaints into the ear ever ready to listen to him with patient sympathy, who never

troubled him with blame or reproach—who had even learnt to deck her face with smiles to please him, though heavy sighs might be weighing on her heart, and for his sake to conceal the tears she shed in secret.

But now he gazed upon her when she was unaware of his presence—and what a tale might he have read from the sight!

Was she who lay there the same bright being he had made his wife—the proud, the beautiful Maud? Then rose before his imagination a bright picture of her figure, such as she had stood before him that evening on which he had marked her out as his victim; now where was all the rose-like, healthful brilliancy of her beauty, which had so captivated him, the expression of proud happiness on her queen-like brow! the carefully arranged toilette—telling of the tender solicitude of a mother's care.

Now he still beheld the same grace in the extended, drooping form; but how fragile did it appear, how painfully changed in the charac-

ter of their loveliness were the faultless features of that face, with the drooping hair, which, pushed carelessly from the brow, displayed their delicate outlines, and the transparent whiteness of the complexion, rendered still more remarkable by a bright feverish spot of crimson on each cheek—and then—it is the countenance which alone can speak with truth of the ravages pain or sorrow has occasioned, for it is the index to the heart—and in that of Maud, much might have been read had Harry Percy dared to have attempted the perusal—but he turned hastily away from the window, and entered the apartment. Though he trod softly, his footsteps seemed, as if in a dream, to have reached her ear, for she moved her lips, and then gave a faint sigh.

Percy gently pronounced her name, and then the spell was broken; she raised herself on the couch, gazed for an instant around her with the bewilderment of one suddenly aroused from sleep—and then, with a cry of joy, flew to

him, and clasped him as tenderly in her arms,—as gratefully, as if he had never caused her tears to flow, or stolen away the happiness of her young life.

“ I fear, dear Maud, you will find you have no cause to rejoice at being favored with my company this evening,” said Harry Percy, as, the first greeting over, he threw himself on the sofa. “ I am in no agreeable mood I assure you. I am terribly ill and bored to death.”

“ But I do rejoice,” she said, seating herself by his side and gently stroking back the dark hair from his brow, “ for if you are ill, and bored, as you say you are, should you not come home to your wife to nurse and comfort you?”

“ Well! you will soon have enough of that work,” he answered with assumed carelessness of tone—“ I wish you joy of it.”

“ Then you will remain,” she timidly said, “ in this beautiful spot, and not return to Baden.”

“ Confound Baden !” he muttered between his teeth.

“ Oh ! yes, stay here,” she continued with more confidence, “ and see how well and happy you will soon become.”

“ Happy !” he exclaimed with bitterness. “ I don’t see much prospect of ever again being happy in this life !”

Softened at length by her soothing caresses and gentle words, his partly assumed ill humour gave way, and soon he had poured out his troubles in her ear, and revealed to her the wretched state to which he was reduced, with regard to money—how impossible it would be for him, even to shew his face in Baden, till a remittance, which he rather expected, should arrive. “ In short,” he continued passionately, “ I am sick of the world, and all in it ; and really, Maud,” and he changed his voice to his own quick, earnest manner, “ you look so peaceful here, it is quite tempting. I shall certainly rusticate for some time,

it's the best thing I can do. But come, you must enliven me," he added, as Maud silently bent her head and kissed his brow to hide the tears which mingled emotions had wrung from her full heart.

"Where is the child?" said Percy, after a pause.

"In bed, asleep," she replied, "will you come and look at him?"

"Presently—I would to God I were him."

"Shall I sing to you?" Maud then asked.

"Yes, that will be delightful; but not a melancholy ditty like the one I heard just now — I have had enough of dolefuls."

She flew to bring the guitar, and placed herself on a low stool at his feet.

"Then it must be no 'harp of sighs,'" she said, looking up into his face with a smile, as she thus alluded to the beautiful song of Haynes Bayley, a great favourite of Harry's—"perhaps you will prefer 'my harp of smiles,'" and striking the chords she broke forth. She strug-

gled to infuse so much life and spirit into her voice, that in the first two verses, one who had but a short time before, heard her sad tones, must have wondered at the change.

“ Oh ! if upon my harp of smiles
One string may still be found,
For thee once more I'll strive to wake
Its long neglected sound.
I must be gay ; that smile of thine
Ne'er shone on me in vain.
Come forth my harp of smiles,
I'll sing my cheerful songs again.

I thought that in my solitude
Such songs would ne'er be sung,
But thou art here and I am changed,
My very heart seems young.
One link restored, we re-unite
The long lost broken chain,
Come forth my harp of smiles
I'll sing my cheerful songs again.”

But when she reached the third verse, beginning with

“ I'll sing of love, aye love like thine,”

her voice became choked and she averted her

face ; she sang on, but with pain and difficulty, and with a swelling heart, she struggled through it—but almost immediately, Percy, without any comment on the song, exclaimed in an abrupt, but anxious tone—

“ Are you well, Maud ? ”

She raised her head, the blood rushing to her heart, and hesitatingly answered—“ Yes, dearest.”

“ But it is folly saying yes, Maud, if you are not well,” he continued, somewhat impatiently, “ it strikes me that you have become wretchedly thin—*are* you ill ? tell me the truth, for you ought to have advice.”

“ Oh ! no, Harry,” Maud replied, hurriedly, “ you know I had a cough in the winter, but this fine spring weather has taken it away, and I feel well—very well at this moment,” and she resumed her seat by his side and leant her head on his bosom.

“ Then it is the way you dress now—and your hair, Maud—you are not so particular

about your personal appearance as you used to be."

She was silent—Whose fault was that? Who had deprived her of the means of keeping up the appearance due to her station, of even the heart to find pleasure in adorning her person—the motive for arranging in the most becoming manner, her once much prized, luxuriant hair.

But it was not this thought that kept Maud silent. She could not speak at that moment, because these expressions of interest from her husband—words that she had not heard for so long a time, brought a rush of emotion to her heart, which checked her utterance. "He loves me—he loves me," she told herself, "it was but play that drew him from me, and now he will return to me. Poverty, I shall bless you, if through your means his heart may again be mine!"

A week passed, and an oasis in the wilderness of life, did that week appear to the true

woman's heart of our poor Maud ; to have her husband by her side, suffering her to soothe, to comfort him ; to see him delighted and interested in the playful wiles of their little Harry, and even listening with attention to her counsel and plans concerning their future schemes ; given by her without the slightest reproach for the past, but with clear-sighted, judicious firmness, proving her to be a being not only formed to love and be loved, but one, on whom in trouble he might place implicit trust and confidence, a creature formed for the hour of need, to comfort, counsel, and command. And this was the treasure "of price far above rubies" doomed to be slighted for the sports of sin and folly.

A week, we said, had passed, a week in which Maud could rise in the morning with a feeling of happiness—so strange—so full in its intensity, that well indeed might she tremble for its continuance—well might she ask with a sigh of fearful doubt and anxiety at the close

of every day—"Will this be the last—will this blissful peace also pass away, and leave me more wretched than before?"

Only those who knew Harry Percy could possibly appreciate the attraction of his society; no description can do justice to its charm; nature had indeed gifted him with a beauty of manner, which was quite his own, and perfectly bewitching in its influence; and when the heavy cloud with which worldly care overshadowed his really fine disposition, for a while dispersed, under the influence of softer, holier feelings, then again he seemed everything that the imagination could picture as delightful, his presence actual sunshine; the heaviest, saddest heart was lightened by his voice—the dreariest prospect seemed to brighten into hope—all his faults were forgotten; no impression remained; but that he was the most charming creature in the world.

Sad, sad, that this beautiful, gifted specimen of one of God's fairest works, should have

wasted the gifts thus abundantly showered upon him, in works whose fruits are truly—destruction.

One morning, however, there came an interruption to the calm of poor Maud. A letter, that vehicle of annoyance, was brought to her husband; the contents he did not reveal to her, but the whole of the day following its perusal, she remarked that he looked abstracted and perplexed.

She longed to ask him to relieve his mind, by confiding to her that which troubled him—but there was an embarrassment, and evident avoidance of her observation, in his manner, which forbade her doing so. In the evening, however, after having sat for some time, his head averted, and buried in thought, he said hastily and abruptly, but without looking at her,

“Maud, I shall have to go away to-morrow for a short time.”

Maud's heart sunk, as if a thunder-bolt had

fallen upon it, and in a low voice murmured, "Where?" He did not reply to her question, but as if he had not heard her, began to look over some papers, that lay before him on the table.

Maud arose, and laying her hand on his shoulder, murmured,

"But you will take me with you, Harry—will you not?"

"I wish I could—upon my word I do—but it's impossible I do assure you—it's on business—tiresome business—some person whom I have appointed to meet me half-way from Paris to settle some money matters—it will not however detain me more than a few days, and then on my return we can arrange about leaving this place, and going to Italy, or anywhere you like," and he rattled on as if to disperse the anxious words he saw rising to her lips—but again when he paused for breath, she besought him to allow her to accompany him.

"My dear girl I tell you it is impossible—and the child would you leave him?"

“With Lucy I should have no fears for his safety—but why cannot we take him too?”

“My dear love that would be making a serious move of what I intend to be merely a few days’ trip—it would add both to the trouble and expense—besides if it were to reach the ears of the people at Baden, that we had taken ourselves off together, we should have the police after us—now pray let it be as I settled it first—I ask it as a favor, that you say no more about it.”

The morrow came—Maud was pressed to her husband’s heart with a tenderness which reminded her of days of yore. She bade him hasten back, for she could not live without him, and it was with passionate feeling that she spoke, which told how this short period of renewed hope, had revived her before timid, drooping love—she had seen him kiss his boy and gaze upon his lovely face with fervent affection, amounting to emotion, for tears

stood in his eyes—she stood and watched the vehicle in which he had departed, bear him through the valley, till at length the winding road concealed it from her sight, and she once more stood solitary and alone.

But not as before—with a spirit sunk in the desponding apathy of hopeless misery—the Gambler's resigned—broken hearted wife! A new power seemed to have raised up her soul—she felt as if her destiny were about to change—her time of probation nearly ended—her prayers about to be answered—The time had come, when her husband would respect her as a wife—a counsellor---a friend---His love was hers, she felt assured---oh joyful thought!---all would in future be happiness. In short, hope, blessed hope, filled her young heart, and what cannot be endured while a spark of hope remains?

Oh woman, shall we most admire or pity the persevering devotion of your nature, which

requires but a breath of hope to raise your
drooping spirit.

“ And as a vine the oak has shaken off,
Bends lightly to her leaning trust again.”

CHAPTER XII.

“ Oh! then kind Heaven! be this my latest breath;
Here end my life, or make it worth my care;
Absence from whom we love is worse than death,
And frustrate hope severer than despair.”

COWPER

It was the day after her husband's departure, that Maud met with a most unexpected adventure. She was strolling with her little boy in the beautiful environs of her cottage, which was situated in a secluded recess at the entrance of a beautiful valley, well known to

tourists as a most picturesque spot. Seldom however before May is its quiet much disturbed by visitors—Maud might have rambled some distance from her abode without risk of encountering any individual save the inhabitants of the neighbouring little hamlet.

On the day however of which we are now speaking, she was tempted, by the mild brightness of an April afternoon, to wander forth accompanied by her child, and a young German girl who attended upon him when Lucy was otherwise occupied. She had paused to survey the beauties of a landscape which, on emerging from a shady wood, was suddenly presented to her view, when she was startled by the sound of carriage wheels, accompanied by the laughing and talking of many gay voices, and she had just time to re-enter the copse with the little boy and his maid, before a travelling carriage, containing several ladies and gentlemen rolled past.

Maud with surprise recognised amongst that

gay party, as unseen she stood, and watched them pass, the two persons in the world perhaps she least expected to behold—Lady Templeton and Miss Lavinia Grantley—Yes, even if the elegant, languid form, gracefully leaning back in the carriage, could have been mistaken, that hearty boisterous laugh—that joyous, sparkling countenance, could have belonged to none but her former merry acquaintance Lavinia.

Maud stood till they had disappeared from her sight, with suspended breath, as if rooted to the spot with amazement—and then a sickening qualm came over her heart—and then a bitter gush of tears.

What remembrances did the sight of those two beings recal to her memory—prophecies of evil too surely fulfilled !

Plunged in painful reverie—she again issued from the wood to pursue her walk homeward, which was in a different direction to that taken by the carriage party, who were

probably proceeding to the picturesque village of Geraldson some miles further, and she paused not till but at a few yards' distance on the opposite side of the road, she perceived an equestrian slowly proceeding over the rough, stony path. If a hideous monster had suddenly appeared before her, Maud could hardly have felt more dismay, than on not only recognising, but perceiving herself recognised by Lord Templeton.

At once she felt that a second retreat was impossible; there had already been a sudden start—an inquisitive peer beneath her bonnet—a smile of recognition! The horse's head was turned towards her, and the next moment Lord Templeton stood by her side.

“Mrs. Percy!—ah, I thought I could not be mistaken, though I might be pardoned for doubting at first, that so great and unexpected a pleasure could be a reality!”

“You might indeed,” she replied, after having accepted his offered hand with as much dig-

nified composure as the extreme annoyance of this rencontre enabled her to assume, "it is a long time since we met."

"Ah there's a tell tale, that so it is indeed," answered Lord Templeton glancing at the little boy, "at least if as I conclude——but no, I can scarcely believe that to be your child——How time flies, it really makes one feel quite ancient."

"Lady Templeton is quite well I hope," said Maud, feeling no desire to listen to the moralising of Lord Templeton on the flight of time, and wishing to bring the interview to as speedy a close as possible.

"Perfectly well I believe," drawled Lord Templeton, "that is to say as well as a winter at Paris ever leaves a lady. Freshness and bloom do not flourish in the heated atmosphere of balls and routs, as it does in the quiet of woods and valleys," and he fixed a meaning, significant look on the face of Maud, whose lip curled with a bitter expression ; understanding the

implied compliment, she felt all its empty flattery—for how changed must she be since the Earl had last seen her—Could he look on her faded cheek and altered form and then talk of blooming looks?

But in Lord Templeton's compliment there was more sincerity than she gave him credit for. The air and exercise had given her cheeks a hue like health and bloom—and there was the dazzling whiteness of the brow, the splendid eyes—the graceful dignity of the form! In short the sudden appearance of one so fair in that romantic and solitary spot, was well calculated to strike him with surprise and admiration.

Lord Templeton then proceeded to acquaint her with the cause of their meeting.

The young Duchess of——had taken it into her head to make an excursion to Baden before returning to England. They had been persuaded to accompany her—he had been such a fool as to allow himself to be decoyed into the party—

and there he was at that horrid place—they had only arrived two days before, and he was expected to lionize damp vales, and leafless forests, when he should be sunning himself in St. James's Street.

“ I should certainly have cut the concern and taken myself off, had I not luckily stumbled upon Percy.”

“ Then you saw Mr. Percy before he went,” interrupted Maud.

“ Oh yes,” he said, somewhat hesitatingly, “ that is——just caught a glimpse of him——for he was so confoundedly busy that ——that——”

“ Yes, he was called away rather unexpectedly on business.”

“ Indeed !” said his lordship, and he stooped down and patted his horse's mane, thereby concealing from Maud's view a somewhat dubious expression, lurking in the smile which curled his lip ; and then as Maud testified by a parting bow her desire to depart, he murmured

a hope that they might meet again, made his adieu and proceeded on his way.

Maud if she had looked at his face, might have perceived that odious smile she had always so hated; as it was however she could not complain of Lord Templeton's present manner—it was an improvement on his former demeanour—there had not been so much either of the cold, sneering conceit, or the easy familiarity which generally characterised his bearing. However, the annoyance this meeting caused her was great, for she was aware of her husband's anxiety, that his retreat should be unknown to his friends—and she also dreaded that it might entail upon her a visit from Lady Templeton.

“For most likely she will think she ought to come and see me, if only out of compassion—or perhaps to glory over her foresight,” poor Maud soliloquised,—“but no, Lady Templeton,” she continued, “your prophecy is *not* yet fulfilled—I have suffered much, but I have

not sunk into the cold resignation you predicted — and I still aspire to my husband's love, though truly wave after wave has threatened to bear it from me—but still I cling —still, whilst strength is left, I will hold it to my heart — death alone shall compel me to let go my hold.”

On her return home, Maud told Lucy of her adventures.

“ Now did I not say so ? ” exclaimed Lucy, “ I was sure that the man I saw come peering about here, just an hour ago, with his glass stuck in his eye, was his lordship. What business had he this way I wonder ? — it was all curiosity — for he turned back again when he had gone a very little past the window — I took pretty care to keep well out of his sight.”

On the second afternoon succeeding this event, Maud was seated by the window of her little drawing-room reading a letter from May

—yes, after an interval of long silence a letter had been brought to her.

Lord Percival before his death, had not forgotten to advocate, warmly and affectionately the cause of one who had awakened in his kind heart such deep interest. No, even in his last hours, he had remembered Maud, and said to Arthur,

“ Balfour, do not let them forget Mrs. Percy — do not let them desert her poor thing, for she is much to be pitied——you will be kind to her Arthur, when you and May are——”

“ Kind to her, Percival —— I would lay down my life to serve her.”

Many affectionate letters, even during her own deep misery, May had written to her sister with kind messages, and presents of money for her own use, from her father—but what more could be done to serve one who was situated as the exiled Maud — linked as she was to a being whose conduct did not tend to decrease the prejudice which had become so

firmly planted in the usually generous, benevolent breast of Mr. Sutherland.

And so again the correspondence had gradually relaxed into constraint, and lately had only continued at intervals—for Harry Percy's conscience winced at the idea of the *espionage* of his affairs, which might be carried on, through the medium of the sisters' letters, and therefore much discouraged its continuance.

But now it seemed that the desperate state of their fortunes had reached the ears of her family ; for in the letter before her, enclosing an order for a considerable sum of money, was also an assurance, that for her and her child there would be a home at Sutherland ever open to receive them, and an implied desire that she should avail herself of this refuge. For an instant came the—

“ Yearning of the exile's breast,
The haunting sound of voices far away
And household steps.”

but the next she had raised her swimming

eyes with a smile of proud devotion quivering on her lips, and murmured,

“ Never till death——or——”

“ Papa, Papa !” cried the sweet voice of the child from without, as he sprang from the grass on which he was seated, filling his lap with spring flowers. And Maud too started up with a cry of joy, and flew to meet, as she supposed, her husband.

But no, the boy was now rapidly retreating from the spot, where stood the person he had at first taken for his father—and Maud perceived that it was not Harry Percy, but Lord Templeton. He had alighted from his horse, and was looking round, evidently to find some means of disposing of it.

Maud had no inclination to advance, in order to meet so unwelcome a guest, one who had caused her so cruel a disappointment; taking her child by the hand, she hastily returned to the house.

A moment after Lord Templeton was at the

door, and the next he was ushered into her presence by the German girl, Lucy not being at home.

"May I hope for pardon for thus intruding?" he said most respectfully, as Maud, looking the surprise she wished him to see, coldly bowed as he entered.

"Riding past this way," his Lordship continued, "I could not refrain from stepping in for one instant, to tell you how sorry Lady Templeton is, that she will be prevented for a day or two, having the pleasure of calling upon you; she has, with the Duchess, set out on some expedition, from which I begged to be excused—really a sweet spot this," and he looked round on the little apartment, which though boasting of no greater perfection than the usual habitations of that sort on the continent, possessed nevertheless an air of taste and refinement; for there were books and flowers, and music to embellish it, and more than all, her graceful self, in all her natural elegance;

and although Lord Templeton perceived how slight, almost to fragility, she had become—how almost painfully beautiful the delicacy of her chiselled features, which her hair carefully braided in classic simplicity so plainly revealed, all this perhaps increased Lord Templeton's admiration, for it was the style of loveliness most grateful to the extreme refinement of taste of which he boasted. Maud felt much relieved by his communication with regard to Lady Templeton—in two or three days Percy would have returned, and she experienced a sort of nervous anxiety, that if she must meet Lady Templeton, it should be in her husband's company, and not as a seemingly deserted—lonely wife.

It was in consequence of this feeling of relief perhaps that she somewhat relented of her cold hauteur, and remembering that he was a friend of her husband's, she courteously entered into the conversation he commenced.

His Lordship possessed really pretensions to

the reputation he had obtained in the *beau monde*, of being a man of talent—Nay, he was absolutely a poet—that is to say the Book of Beauty, or Gem, or some such work, amidst its aristocratic trash, boasted of some of his lordship's effusions, and perhaps they were rather of a higher stamp than most of the contributions.

When he thought it worth the trouble, which was seldom the case with ladies, whose abilities he held in great contempt---he could shake off his sickening affectation and supercilious nonchalance, and make himself really an agreeable companion.

On this occasion, when half an hour had elapsed, and he arose to depart, Maud was quite astonished that time spent with a guest so unwelcome, should have passed away so quickly, and in so agreeable a manner.

But when the next afternoon, he again appeared under some pretext, not equally plausible as the day before, and laboured to make

himself still more charming, advancing every moment in intimacy, she deemed it expedient to take some step, in order to prevent the repetition of his lordship's visits, and on his departure she said politely, but firmly—

“ I hope, Lord Templeton, that Mr. Percy will be home very soon; *when* he returns we shall be happy to see you here again.”

He fixed his eyes upon her face, with a peculiar smile, and pressing her hand again, left her---pausing however at the door to speak to Lucy, who received his salutation with no great cordiality; then untying his horse from the tree to which he had fastened it, rode away.

Maud now began to feel more nervous and anxious than ever for her husband's return. He had been away five days, and that was the period he had named for his absence; it would not therefore be worth while writing he had said, but he promised, at her entreaties, that should he be detained beyond that period, she should hear from him.

The next day, and the next however passed, and no Harry Percy, and no letter arrived.

It was the evening of the last, that with a gloomy weight upon her heart, a heavy darkness upon her soul, which had not oppressed her so painfully since her husband's departure, she fled from the solitude and profound stillness of her lonely abode, and went out into the fresh air of an April twilight, to meet the little boy who, as usual, had been taken out for a walk by the German girl.

It was with slow and languid steps that she pursued her way, for besides the depression of her spirits, she felt weak and ill in body—it was with difficulty she drew her breath, and she suffered from the return of a painful cough. Suddenly however the voice of the child caught her ear, and she was hastening her pace and looking towards the spot.

The boy was not alone with his maid. On a bank by the side of a stream, two female figures were seated. One of them, evidently

of a superior grade, was dressed in the deepest mourning—a large crape bonnet completely concealing her face. Her lap was filled with flowers, and she sat perfectly motionless, eagerly watching the movements of little Harry, who, whilst his maid held him fast, was stretching out his little hands to gather some bright blossoms growing on the banks of the stream.

Maud drew near, but still remained unobserved by the group.

The flowers plucked—the child ran towards the stranger, lisping in his winning manner,

“Here ladies—here, pretty flowers,” and the lady caught him in her long, thin arms, and pressed him to her heart with a suddenness and impetuosity which quite startled Mrs. Percy, who made a step in advance. The attendant also rose hastily and approached closer to her, but by that time little Harry was released from the violent embrace, looking somewhat alarmed.

Maud was now sufficiently near to hear the person say, as she took the child by his hand,

“ Yes, this dear, little young gentleman will go home now, and he will come another day and pick flowers.”

But the lady again stretched out her hand and drew the child towards her, saying fretfully in a sort of unnatural voice, which sounded painfully on the ear—

“ No, no, let him stay—he *shall* stay—he *shall* not go—I love to look at him,” and she gently stroked the child’s face, and parted the hair on his brow. “ What’s his name ?” she at length suddenly exclaimed in an impatient, excited voice, looking round at her companion, “ how very strange,” and she laughed a wild unnatural laugh, “ I have quite forgotten it—I used to know his name, did I not? but he has been away so long—so very long—and I forget it now,” and she put her hand to her head as if in pain.

The attendant turning towards the German girl, made her a sign to take the child away, and then stooping down to the latter, who had

fixed his beautiful eyes with a half fearful, half curious glance on the lady's face, said,

“ Kiss the lady, darling, and tell her your name, and then she will let you go home. Dear Madam,” she continued, as her mistress again quickly drew the child towards her as if she feared his being taken from her, “ it is very late, quite time for the little gentleman to go home—a thick fog is rising, it will do you harm, and this dear child too.”

The lady again put her hand to her head, whilst she held with the other, the boy with a firm grasp, murmuring,

“ But I forget his name—it is very hard they will not tell me his name.”

“ Tell her your name, pretty young gentleman,” again persisted the attendant.

“ Harry Percy,” said the child's clear, innocent voice, “ my name is Harry Percy,” and Maud, with a scream of horror, sprang forward as she saw her child dashed furiously from the unfortunate being who held him in her grasp.

whilst the words "Harry Percy" were echoed by her lips with a dreadful shriek which rang through the woods around.

Once before Maud had heard a similar scream, and the truth, for the first time, darted with fearful certainty to the mind of our heroine, and when having reached her child, she caught him in her arms, and pressed him to her bosom, again and again, the cry burst forth.

The unfortunate woman had risen—her hands were clasped wildly above her head, and with all the fury of madness, these terrible words were shrieked forth—

"Harry Percy—Harry Percy—may the vengeance of Heaven fall on Harry Percy, and on all the murderers of my boy—yes, they murdered him—I see them—I see them there—there," and she pointed upwards into the vacant air. "His blood—his blood is on them—my innocent boy's blood—but he was here just now—I held him in my arms---I was stroking his pretty face---I was playing with

his curls, and now he is bleeding---they have murdered him---yes, murdered him," and again she shrieked wildly, whilst Maud knelt, shielding the child from her sight, almost paralysed with horror and affright.

The attendant stood by the side of Mrs. Raymond, for it was indeed that unhappy woman, and endeavoured by gentle, but firm remonstrance to soothe her violence, ever and anon glancing in the direction of the village; and soon there was seen hastening towards them, a gentleman, accompanied by little Harry's maid, and another female; and at their nearer approach, Maud, sick and faint, with feeble, tottering steps, drew her child from the dreadful scene, and through a thick, wet fog, which had now spread over the valley, sought her home.

So great had been the shock to her weak nerves, that it was long before she could explain to Lucy the origin of her agitation, which the latter attributed to another cause. The

fact was, not long after her mistress had left the house, Lord Templeton again made his appearance. On learning that Mrs. Percy was not at home, he had even begged to be allowed to enter the house, and await her return, but Lucy, in such plain terms, had denied him admittance, that he was forced to depart, however, expressing his intention, of repeating his visit on an early occasion.

Maud, when she heard this relation, covered her face with her hands, and burst into tears: she did indeed feel lonely and deserted, and she murmured—

“ Oh, Harry, when—when will you return to protect me ? ”

Lucy had an end in view in disclosing this circumstance to Mrs. Percy. She entertained secret misgivings of her own, and now strongly concurred in Maud's determination to risk her husband's displeasure by writing to him, and urging him to lose no time in returning to her. The only means of forwarding the letter, was

directing it to the care of a person who transacted business for Percy at Baden.

The intelligence Lucy gained of Mrs. Raymond, the next day, was, that since her terrible bereavement, she had remained in a state of settled melancholy derangement, for which the physicians recommended continual change of scene, and gentle treatment : lately she had been subject at intervals to such fits of violence that it was necessary to provide a keeper to assist in managing her. Her brother had, the day before, accompanied his afflicted relative to the lovely little village, intending to settle her in that quiet retreat during the spring months, and the mind of the poor maniac had for a short time been in a more quiescent state ; but the name of Harry Percy, so innocently pronounced by the child, had recalled to her disordered fancy, with full force, the horrid remembrance with which that name was associated.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Away—

 If thou wert honorable,
Thou would'st have told this tale for virtue, not
For such an end thou seek'st ; as base as strange.”

CYMBELINE.

THE town of Baden had been rendered peculiarly gay at that early season, by the arrival of an English Duchess and party, at the Badenden Hof; a party who seemed to have come there for the sole purpose of amusing themselves, and who filled every place of public

resort, with the gay and brilliant atmosphere of their presence.

On the present evening, the splendid saloons of Chabert were to be thrown open for a *bal paré*, the first of the season, and which was expected to be very well attended.

The Duchess and her party were of course to be there, and they contemplated no little amusement, from the strange medley of company of which such an assembly was most likely to consist.

“ My dear Lady Templeton,” said Lavinia Grantley, who was seated in an apartment of the *Badenden Hof*, “ will you persuade your worthy sposo to take me out riding? he is so ill-natured—I do so long for a good canter this fine day, and all the other men are so lazy; I know he is going out, for I heard him order his horse---now are you not, Lord Templeton?”

“ Yes, I believe that is my intention.”

“ Then will you take me with you?”

“Ve---ry sorry, but ’pon honor must decline that great pleasure,” replied his lordship.

“Now that’s too bad of you ; Julia, how can you allow him to go rambling and roving about the country---Heaven knows where, every day, all alone ? pretty mischief he’s after I dare say ; if I were you, I’d put a stop to it.”

“My dear Lavinia, you know I never interfere with Lord Templeton’s movements,” answered her ladyship, turning away with a disdainful curl of her lip.

“By the bye, Julia,” continued the young lady, “I’ve such a delightful piece of news to tell you—we shall meet that dear, darling Harry Percy at the ball to-night—so William Gore tells me.”

“And Mrs. Percy,” said Lady Templeton, the cold, careless air with which she had been listening to her lively companion’s discourse, changing to an appearance of some interest, “is she to be there also ?”

“ Oh Heaven knows what has become of her, poor thing ! Harry Percy is staying at the old Jew Count's, flirting desperately with the Countess ; but where he has hid his beautiful wife no one knows. I'll ask him to-night.”

Lady Templeton sighed, and it was with a sadness which rose from her very heart, that she murmured—

“ Poor thing ! indeed !”

Lord Templeton again looked up from his paper, and, fixing his eyes on Miss Grantley, laughed “ his odious laugh,” as poor Maud used to call it ; and then without heeding Lavinia's question of—“ Now, Lord Templeton, how malicious you look—what are you laughing at ?” he strolled leisurely out of the room, and was soon seen riding slowly from the door of the Hotel. He was shortly after proceeding along the shady avenue of oaks which leads from the upper end of the town to the valley, and at length once more stood at the door of Percy's habitation.

Lord Templeton gently knocked, and contrary to his expectations, was immediately admitted by Lotterchen, who with a curtsy and a *He in mein herr*, ushered him into the little sitting room. It was unoccupied, but the girl opened the door of another apartment, as he supposed to announce his arrival.

At first he could hear no other sound but the peevish fretting and murmuring of a sick child, interrupted by a hard, hoarse cough, which seemed to give much pain to the sufferer—the next moment he heard the chattering of the servant, as if endeavouring to exculpate herself from some fault, and Lucy's exclamation of—

“ Well to be sure! the impudence of that man! what business had you to let him in?”

Then he heard the girl's retreating steps—the door was shut, and he had to remain about ten minutes more in suspense. His lordship opened every book which was scattered about, and then took up some miniatures which lay on

the table. The first which he unclasped was soon carelessly re-closed—it was that of a child—he hated children!—the second was shut up with even more haste, but from a different cause; the most hardened conscience can seldom encounter, suddenly, without a qualm, the unconscious countenance of one, we are meditating to wrong, and it was his *friend* Harry Percy, whom he there beheld! The third miniature seemed to afford him more gratification, for a pleased smile stole over his countenance as he examined it. It was a portrait of Maud, taken just after he had first seen her, in the height of her youthful, blooming beauty.

“ By Jove !” he soliloquised, “ ’tis beautiful, and although the original, to my taste, is still scarcely less so, she must be dreadfully altered since this was taken. Harry—Harry, my boy ! you’re asad fellow—now this comes of marrying a woman with a heart—it is most inconvenient—better to be content with less sensibility, and then one may act as it pleases the fancy,

with impunity---how she used to idolise Percy—and think him perfection, almost a saint---I suppose she has discovered, by this time, that her idol is anything but a divinity---I don't know, however—he was always a sly dog---it will only be a piece of kindness, and forward my views, to open her eyes a little.”

Lord Templeton now began to be very impatient for the sound of the light footstep he was expecting, but for some time he heard nothing but the suppressed murmuring of a voice, and now and then that loud, ringing cough, which he noticed as a very unpleasant noise.

At length, however, the door opened, and Maud appeared before him. Her cheeks were brightly flushed, but through the displeased air of dignity which she strove to assume, there were touching traces of sorrow, care, and anxiety on her countenance. She had been forced to leave the side of her child to meet her unwelcome visiter---the child, whose innocent

glee, for the first time in his life, she had the grief to behold, checked by painful illness---his placid countenance disturbed by suffering.

The preceding night he had been attacked by a hoarse cough, which Lucy attributed to the damp fog in which he had returned home that evening. She had sent for the doctor, who had administered some remedies, but did not seem to consider the case of much importance.

His anxious mother had not left him all the day, and he was lying on her knee, fretful and feverish, when the unwelcome announcement of Lord Templeton's arrival was brought to her. Maud, however, determined to see him in spite of Lucy's indignant persuasions to the contrary, who offered to go herself, and send him about his business.

"No, Lucy," she said, "it is I who should put a stop to this; he may have mistaken my request that he would not visit me again until Mr. Percy's return—if he did—he shall at least

understand it now," and after a few lingering moments to collect sufficient composure for so distasteful an interview, she consigned the now dozing child to the arms of Lucy, who watched her mistress depart, with a heart swelling with indignation, not only against Lord Templeton, but against him, whom now in her own mind she designated as "her good for nothing master."

She laid the little boy on the bed, and then awaited, with eager anxiety, and no little curiosity, (for good Lucy was, after all, "*a Lady's maid!*") the result of the interview. She heard the door close, and then the alternate sounds of the voices of her mistress and her visiter, but too faintly to ascertain the nature of their conversation.

A quarter of an hour at least passed thus, and Lucy's attention had become more directed to her dear little charge, for the loud, ringing cough had again aroused him from his uneasy

sleep, and she bent over him to endeavour to soothe his fretful calls for "Mamma!"

"Alas!—alas!" thought Lucy, "if this poor darling is going to be seriously ill, it will be all over with us indeed."

She was not experienced in the management of children, but the feverish heat---the difficult breathing, alarmed her so much that she determined again to summon the doctor.

But now, once more her attention was directed, in a startling manner, to what was passing in the neighbouring apartment, for the stillness which had reigned over the little habitation was broken by a sound, which it was long since she had last heard; it was the voice of her mistress, and its elevated tones reminded her of other days---they were expressions of anger.

"'Tis false---'tis false, Lord Templeton---I tell you it is false," were the words which clearly rang upon her ear, "do you think thus, base, vile, dishonorable man---thus do you

think to ingratiate yourself? Go---leave me---this instant leave the house, into which, like a coward, you have dared to creep, to insult a poor, defenceless woman---to poison her ears with calumny against her husband--*her husband*, whom you would make her believe was like yourself, a traitor---a---"

The less distinct voice of Lord Templeton interposed, and Lucy could hear no more. Almost immediately the bell was loudly rang, and at the same instant the door opened, and Lord Templeton was heard to steal along the passage out of the house---and with a feeling of triumphant gratification---she fancied she could tell by his step, that he departed, mortified and discomfited.

She waited a few minutes with some eagerness, expecting her mistress to return to the nursery, but she came not, and as the child had been for some time impatiently calling for his mother, she determined to go and seek her.

She entered the sitting-room. Maud was

standing in the middle of the room, mute and motionless as a statue, but with no signs of the resentment, which the sound of her voice had indicated, visible upon her countenance. Her eyes were fixed---her parted lips were pale. She looked like one just awkening from a horrible dream, and still uncertain whether what had disturbed her was an illusion, or a terrible reality.

At first she took no notice of Lucy's appearance, but when the latter said "dear Madam, are you ill, what is the matter?" She raised her eyes, sunk upon a chair, and burst into a flood of tears.

Long and bitterly she wept. Lucy kneeling by her side, mingling her tears with those of her beloved mistress; and at length when her emotion would allow her to speak, imploring her to say what she could do to serve her.

"Oh why, Ma'am, why did you not call me in to drive away the wretch who has dared thus

to grieve you: that you indeed should be exposed to insult, alone, unprotected, you---"

Maud at these last words raised her head, and with eyes which flashed such fire, that it seemed to dry up the flowing tears, exclaimed,

"I shall go to Baden---I must have a carriage for to-night.—Lucy, ask me no questions," she continued, "*I must* go to the ball to-night."

Poor Lucy certainly thought the brain of her mistress was turned.

"Madam!" she exclaimed.

"I go to meet Mr. Percy, is there any thing extraordinary in that?" Maud repeated so sternly, so decidedly, that Lucy went to obey her mistress, and a messenger was dispatched on the mission, and desired at the same time to summon the doctor to see the little boy.

Maud again took her place by his side, and sought to sooth his restless fretfulness, but her thoughts were evidently far away—and even the frigthful cough, which became more and

more, frequent seemed hardly noticed by her, and as to the fever—the hand of the suffering child pressed in hers—the lips and cheeks which ever and anon she bent to press—burnt not more fiercely than her own. Time passed—the child was dozing—she noticed to Lucy to take her place, and left, the room.

Lucy sat pondering anxiously—the German girl returned with the carriage and the intelligence that the doctor would arrive in the course of an hour. Bidding Lotterchen remain with the little boy, Lucy then ascended the stairs and entered her mistress's bed-room.

Mrs. Percy was seated before the mirror, and had evidently been attempting to perform for herself the business of the toilette, but as if she had found herself unequal to the task, she seemed to have relinquished the trial, and sat motionless—her eyes fixed abstractedly on the reflection of her face in the glass—her long hair streaming round her.

On perceiving Lucy she started—the color

mounted to her cheeks — she leant her face upon her hand — and then made her a sign that she should dress her hair. Lucy silently obeyed; the shining tresses---with what different feelings to those of past days---were by trembling fingers braided on that burning brow. A gay dress fitted on a form how shrunk since last she had worn it—Maud smiled a ghastly smile and shook her head.

“One less gay, Lucy---this will not do for me.”

“Alas! dear lady---I thought it would fit you best, for it is the last dress Mr. Percy gave you.”

“Oh! yes—then I will wear it—but do I not look very ill, Lucy?” she enquired anxiously, passing her hand over her brow—“does not this gay dress make the contrast too great?”

“Dear—dear Madam,” sobbed Lucy, no longer able to restrain her feelings, “I never saw you look more beautiful—more like an

angel—but is it well that you should go thus—all alone?—your cheeks burn—you are so feverish so excited!”

“Alone! Lucy—yes alone—but fear not—I could make the wretch quail like a coward before the lightning of my eye—the thunder of my indignation. No Lucy,”—and she shuddered—“would that were all—but go, dear, good Lucy—go—I would be alone,” and she put her hand to her head—“that man has confused my senses—I must think what is to be done---go to that poor child—oh! the terrible, unnatural cough—and yet, sweet darling, I cannot go to him just now, my mind is so distracted by other thoughts. Go to him—pray go Lucy,” for she saw her fix an uneasy glance upon her face. “I am better now; but really all this together is almost too much to bear. It is quite enough to turn one’s brain,” she continued, when Lucy had reluctantly left the room. “Poor, poor Mrs. Raymond! and oh! that curse---that dreadful curse, how it rings

in my ears ; but it is not the first curse *I* have heard : did I not hear one the day I left my father's house---the day I broke my mother's heart---and has it not haunted me till now. Heavenly Father thy judgments are just, but oh ! in mercy turn away thy anger from thy weak creature---break not a reed already so sorely bruised. I thought in my presumption—I thought I could have bowed submissively to all thy righteous hand deemed fit to inflict, but forgive---thou hast given me a woman's heart, and this---this I *cannot* bear." She buried her face in her hands and was silent for some moments.

" But it is false---it is false," she suddenly exclaimed in passionate accents—it cannot be, to deceive me thus, to revive in my heart, joy and hope, and then to leave me, who left all for him---no, no, no, I'll believe it not, until I hear from his own lips that he has cast me away---ah yes," and her frame shook with agitation, " I will go to him wherever he may

be, I shall die if I remain thus in agony. Let me consider, what did that base man say? If I believed him not I might go to the ball to-night, and then, with my own eyes, I might see that he had not spoken falsely---that Harry's heart and thoughts were engrossed by another. Could his intention have been but to make me believe myself unprotected? Yes I will go, why should I fear to meet my husband, have I not a right? and if he is not there, I shall but regret that I listened, for a moment, to a traitor's falsehood.

She again rose, her cheek glowing with the fever of excitement.

"Lucy!" she said, as she entered the nursery, and Lucy started at the unnatural tone in which she spoke.

"My dear Madam," exclaimed Lucy, shocked at the sight of her mistress's agitation, "you are ill I am sure, and the little darling, he is so very poorly, dear, dear Madam, if Mr. Percy is at Baden let me go and fetch him to you here."

“ No Lucy, I must go, I tell you; don't think me out of my senses, but they would soon desert me if I remained here any longer without my husband. I will soon be back—I will tell him how ill the darling is—you know how he loves him—he will be so anxious about him.”

All this Maud spoke in a hurried, but cheerful manner as she clasped a bracelet with her husband's picture on her arm; and then she bent over little Harry's bed.

Though the child's breathing was thick and difficult, he was quieter at that moment, and turned his sweet eyes with an air of astonishment on the radiant figure of his mother.

“ Pretty Mama—pretty Mama,” he lisped, and stroked her burning cheek.

“ Is Harry better ?” she gently murmured.

He answered by stretching out his little arms and crying,

“ No, naughty cough hurt Harry—take me—take me.”

“ Darling I am going for papa—Shall I not bring papa—and then we can both sit by our pet and try to send away the naughty cough.”

The child smiled—put out his little hand, and gently pushed her, saying,

“ Go——go !”

Maud pressed that little hand to her lips—then turned away.

CHAPTER XIV.

"What dost thou amongst the bright and fair,
Whispering light words and mocking my despair?"

MRS. HEMANS.

"- - - Ha!——Ha! false to me?
To me!"

OTHELLO.

WE all know what it is to be carried away by the irresistible influence of any violent passion—how excitement, and the impulse of a predominant feeling has led us to act in a manner from which, in calmer moments, we should have shrunk with repugnant horror——and

when awakened from our feverish dream by presence of stern reality—how astounding appears the conduct which has been so rashly pursued.

And thus it was with poor Maud—as with her brain whirling—her heart sinking—and wishing that the earth could open and hide her from the eyes which curiously scanned her—that she could shut from her ears, the sounds of revelry and mirth which jarred so discordantly upon them, she stood alone in the refreshment saloon she had mechanically entered before repairing to the *salle de balle* as she was wont to do under such different auspices—as the courted—admired Mrs. Percy !

“ Mad—mad ! I was indeed,” she murmured to herself, “ what have I done?—why am I here ?”

She had enquired at the door before entering, whether Mr. Percy was in the rooms, and the name and person of Percy being well

known, she was readily answered by the receiver of the tickets, that Mr. Percy was of the Countess's party, who had arrived a short time before. At these words she hurried on.

"Now--now," she gasped, "as I have gone so far it must be carried on---I come, Harry, to claim the protection of my husband---if---if you are guilty, it is you who must quail before my sight---why should *I* tremble to meet you?"

She cast from her, her mantle, and, having swallowed a cup of coffee, sunk upon a chair, in a corner of the room, and strove to attain sufficient composure to support her through her rash undertaking.

She certainly had scarcely considered what she was about to do ; in the desperation of her anguish, her sole thought had been to end the suspense inflicted by Lord Templeton's terrible insinuations---all her innate impetuosity had been roused, and her agony of mind had spurred it on to action.

But though the spot Mrs. Percy had chosen for her painful meditations was retired, she could not entirely escape observation--- and many were the impertinent glances of scrutiny she attracted, from her striking appearance---so lovely---so distinguished looking, but with a look so distressed---so wild---and moreover, apparently so unprotected.

At length a large party swept into the room, and voices fell upon her ear which made her start and shrink back, as if to hide herself from view. She was not seen, and she had time to collect her scattered senses, and determine on her course of proceeding.

At length Mrs. Percy approached a lady of the group who was standing rather apart from the others, and adjusting before a looking-glass her head-dress, and whispered "Lady Templeton."

The person thus addressed started as if a voice from another world had met her ear, and

then turning, fixed a doubtful, scrutinising glance on the speaker.

“ You do not know me, I see, Lady Templeton,” said the same low, melancholy but now calm voice, and she paused for a moment.

“ Are you Mrs. Percy ?” Lady Templeton then began hesitatingly——“ Mrs. Percy is it really you !—you must forgive me —— but —but—this is so unexpected a pleasure,” and then Lady Templeton put out her hand, but her manner was somewhat embarrassed and her look so searching ! However Maud was in no state to heed this circumstance, she eagerly exclaimed, turning her large, wild eyes upon Lady Templeton’s face.

“ Will you do me a great favor—May I go with you into the ball-room—I am alone.”

Lady Templeton looked surprised at her abrupt, excited manner. Again she fixed her eyes upon her face, and said, her tone changing to one of kindness,

“ I shall be most happy, my dear Mrs.

Percy—the rest of my party seem to be on the move, but you would like to wait till—”

“ Yes, if you please,” gasped Maud, and Lady Templeton whispered a few words to a gentleman who approached to offer his arm, and then the Countess and Mrs. Percy were left comparatively alone.

“ Mrs. Percy,” began Lady Templeton as she led her to a seat, and then she paused as if at a loss what to say next——“ is Mr. Percy here ?”

“ He is,” was the answer in a hollow, unnatural tone, “ will you take me to him ?”

“ Yes, certainly ——or would you like me to send for him here ?”

“ Oh yes,” and Maud put her hand to her head and sighed deeply.

Lady Templeton looked round hastily, as if she were very willing to fulfil her request—for suspicions as to the true state of affairs were dawning upon her mind, accompanied by a certain feeling of uneasiness and embarrassment.

That a justly jealous wife was by her side, she did not doubt ; and the heart of the woman of the world, though in a great degree rendered callous to such feelings, by sad knowledge, and bitterly earned experience, was awakened to a sensation of compassion by the sight before her.

“ Was this the innocent, confiding being of other days ? the wife who existed but in the love of her husband—who had spoken of *death*, as the only alternative for its loss——on whom she herself, had smiled in scorn, deeming her words but the enthusiasm of youth and inexperience——But now, in the faded, pale form by her side, for the fever of excitement had faded from her cheek, and left her white as marble, with that wild expression of misery on her countenance, which fearfully manifested the ravages of grief, Lady Templeton read the history of a breaking heart ! But still her ladyship felt no inclination to make herself conspicuous, as a party to a *scene*, for which she

had a fine lady's antipathy—and a scene she foresaw would inevitably ensue if Harry Percy, without any preparation, were confronted by his wife in company with the German Countess ---for his flirtation in that quarter had become most notorious, and threw a light upon Mrs. Percy's evident distress.

Lady Templeton cast an anxious glance in every direction in the hope of seeing some one whom she could dispatch on her mission---but there was no one in sight---at length she thought of undertaking the search herself, and said,

“ I could easily go and look for Mr. Percy if you did not object to being left alone---and Lord Templeton I expect every moment, and I am sure he would be delighted to be of any service to you.”

Maud started to her feet, and exclaimed with a shudder and in a tone of horror,

“ No, not him---dear Lady Templeton not

him---oh let us go---pray let us go---pray take me to my husband." She seized the arm of the astonished Countess and hurried her towards the ball-room.

Dancing was going on as they entered, but many eyes were turned upon them with curiosity, few probably recognising in the death-like looking companion of Lady Templeton, the beauty of the Baden ball-room two seasons before.

Many of Lady Templeton's friends stepped forward to meet her, but making her way through the crowd---Maud still clinging to her arm---she hurried on to the adjoining ante-room, to which the reader may remember having once before been introduced. There she determined to deposit her charge---there seek out the husband, and thus rid herself of so annoying a business.

Promising to return or send Mr. Percy directly, she left Maud apparently alone, for the *salle de jeu*, was receiving within its portals

most of those who were in the vestibule on their entrance.

Lady Templeton left her seated on one side of the group of orange trees which adorned the apartment, and hastened to find some gentleman to assist in her search for the *mari perdu*.

But our poor Maud!—was she really alone?

No!—she soon perceived she was not—from the other side of the orange shrubs, whose shade concealed the speaker from her view, she heard a voice! She started to her feet—she listened with distended eyes—with a heart that stopped in its beatings—She heard the low, eager, impassioned, thrilling tone of a voice, which for so long had been her joy—her support—her existence—and oh God! oh God!—its rich strains were poured into the ear of another, and its theme was—love—yes, love which was her own—her lawful right—the only beam which had brightened the dark days of her young life—whose peace

and happiness she had sacrificed for that love alone—and now it was another's—his vows breathed to another !

Few were the words she caught—but they were enough—too much—“The hope is crushed that lit her life,” a deep convulsive groan, as from a broken heart, resounded—and then the apartment echoed the noise of a heavy fall—and curiosity and excitement pervaded the rooms, when from the anti-room and through the saloon from which it was partitioned, hurrying with agitation and consternation depicted upon his countenance, was seen Harry Percy ! and what was the burden he bore in his arms ? —a form---pale---lifeless---drooping as a broken lily.

Many pressed forward with offers of assistance, but waving them impatiently away, Percy hurried out into the portico, called loudly for a carriage, and whilst anxiously waiting for it, stood gazing earnestly and fearfully on the face of her he held to his breast,---on whose

ghastly cheek, the fresh air was reviving faint signs of returning life --- whose bosom, slightly heaved against his own.

A carriage had just drawn up to the door, and for an instant impeded the advance of the one which was approaching in answer to his summons. A gentleman stepped out of it, and passing close beside them, turned upon the pair a look of scrutiny,

“ Good Heavens ! Percy is it you ?---what’s the matter---and Mrs. Percy too---how is this ? Can I be of any use ? ”

“ Only get out of the way my good fellow,” was the impatient answer, and with open eyes and mouth Lord Templeton watched his friend hurrying with his charge into a carriage, which in another moment had borne them away---and with a shrug his Lordship exclaimed, *sotto voce*.

“ The D—— ! I’ve done some mischief I suppose,” then entered into the saloons with

supercilious facetiousness to join in the string of comments, and listen to the varied stories to which the late scene had given rise---and lastly to laugh in his sleeve at being unknown to them all--the real author of the commotion.

“Such an affair has happened!” cried Lavinia Grantley, as she bounced up to him, “poor dear Mrs. Percy has been carried out fainting by the beautiful Harry---How it all happened nobody knows, but the Countess was found in the anti-room in hysterics---horrid wretch!---poor, beautiful Mrs. Percy! I knew how it would be---this comes of marrying such dear, delightful, wicked men!---Stupid hideous old frumps with plenty of money make by far the best husbands after all---of that I am convinced---I shall really take your advice and accept that fat---gouty Sir Geoffrey Abdy---he won't break my heart I think, and he is rolling in riches.”

It may be gratifying to our readers to learn that Miss Lavinia Grantley has acted up to this

determination, and that if a spacious mansion in Carlton Gardens, splendid equipages, plenty of money, jewels, and fine dresses, constitute happiness, Lady Abdy may be considered to be in possession of perfect felicity.

CHAPTER XV.

“ Now never more—oh ! never in the worth
Of its pure cause, let sorrowing love on earth
Trust fondly—never more, the hope is crushed
That lit my life---the voice within me hushed
That spoke sweet oracles---and I return
To lay my youth as in a burial urn
Where sunshine may not find it.”

MRS. HEMANS.

BUT let us return to her, who was destined to be no gay, heedless butterfly, sporting beneath a summer's sky, amidst the flowers of the world; but like the poor dove sent forth—to find no place on which to set its foot, worn and buf-

fetted with wind and tempest, returned to the ark, there to seek refuge, safe from the raging billows of this stormy earth.

Maud's head was leaning against her husband's breast when sense and feeling returned, and brought back to her mind the remembrance of all that had passed. He had chafed her cold hands, bathed her brow with perfume, and she had recovered. She had breathed a deep sigh, and then suddenly raising her head, gazed wildly around her, seeking to collect her scattered senses, and to remember where she was, and all that had occurred. Alas! remembrance came only too soon. She returned not to that husband's arms, but shrinking into the furthest corner of the carriage, fixed one piercing glance upon his face---truly might

“ Point of foeman's lance
Have given a milder pang,”

to the conscience-stricken heart of Harry Percy, as by the light of the carriage lamps it

flashed upon him ; and well it might---for was not there concentrated in that expression more surely, than in a torrent of bitter words, all the long silenced ire of a torn and tortured heart ? Like the Huldebrand of Ondine, he had dared to open the sluices of the imprisoned fountain, and he found it to his cost, the injured one “ makes her voice heard at last.”

He writhed beneath the intolerable smart ; he would have spoken ; fain would he have attempted the power of his never failing charms of eloquence, but no—they would not do now, the gentle, submissive Maud waved him authoritatively away. She raised her eyes to Heaven, and then to her husband's face, as if to challenge him to gainsay her charge—from her lips there was poured forth with the powerful eloquence of an injured woman, all the too just condemnation of her mighty wrongs.

“ Nay—touch me not, Harry,” she faintly exclaimed, as exhausted she sank back in the carriage, and he would have supported her in

his arms, beseeching her in accents of deep humility to hear him.

“ It is now too late, let me die—for what have I *now* to live? But what do I say,” she exclaimed, starting up. “ My child—my angel child, forgive me, and oh! great God forgive me, and visit not this sin upon me—did I forget the blessing you still have preserved to me? oh take me—take me to my child—my little Harry, your mother left you sick, and suffering, to seek---oh Heavens!” she covered her face with her hands.

“ Sick---suffering,” repeated Harry Percy in a tone of timid concern. “ The child is not ill, Maud, I hope.”

“ Yes ill, with no father near to care for him, and his mother gone---what for? but no matter, why should I speak of it, it is over now—but my cherub, your mother now returns to leave you no more; but what has she now on earth but you?”

And calmed by utter exhaustion, she leant

against the side of the carriage, with eyes strained out through the dark night, as if to watch the distance diminish which separated her from her home.

At length the wretched drive was over---the carriage stopped before the door of their secluded abode, and springing from it, Maud awaited with trembling impatience the opening of the door; but she looked not on her husband, she heeded not his presence, all her desire was now concentrated in the little being within those walls.

The bolted door was slowly opened---Maud flew past Lucy, who vainly attempted to stay her, she reached the room where she had left her child.

“ My darling---my only treasure !” she cried and drew back the curtain of his bed.

Great God of mercy and of judgment look down with pity upon her whom thou hast so sorely smitten ! Poor mother ! lift your eyes above—not on that pale, cold clay. Your

treasure is in heaven—he is called away from this “thorny scene,” this wilderness of woe—to blossom in the blissful gardens of eternity! but alas, miserable woman! that cry of anguish must burst forth—that mother’s agony must find vent; for there lies your flower, now mocking you with its senseless beauty—all—all must go into the cold, dark grave; and you, weary, and broken-hearted, will be left in this world, now so desolate, for you are childless! and the father—yes, it is well, that he should kneel and weep, that his heart should bleed, a heart which had hardened—which had turned from Him who had formed him for better things—a God, who had often called him by his warnings, and who would have gathered him under his wing from the destroying world, into whose snares the infatuated man so wilfully hastened, “*but he would not.*” Yes, look on that young, cold thing, and whilst your eyes weep, and your heart bleeds, see what sin has entailed on the youngest and purest of

mankind—death!—and after that the judgment! and think how high the price which gained admittance, even for that innocent child, into the heaven into which you hope his little golden harp is now sounding; and think, if such as him are “scarcely saved,” where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? turn ere it be too late to your God, who has once more called you by his chastening rod.

* * * * *

Half an hour before the arrival of his parents little Harry Percy had breathed his last. Soon after the departure of his mother that frightful, rapidly fatal malady, the croup, had attained its suffocating height; and the fond, and faithful Lucy had with grief, and terror indescribable, watched her darling nurseling sink rapidly beneath its overpowering influence; thicker and thicker became the stoppage of his breath; at length there was a convulsive gasp—and all was over! his little race was run—and thus

can an evening's breath be "cold with death," thus can the silent dew, wither the fairest flower of the morning.

* * * * *

We may well imagine what must have been the agony of this torturing stroke to the childless mother. So dense for some time was the darkness of her grief, that the light of divine consolation could scarcely pierce through the black cloud. She was "Rachael weeping for her children and would not be comforted."

The heart of Harry Percy in this hour of trial brought low, and humbled by a consciousness of a well merited punishment, hardly dared to lift up his voice to bewail his bereavement; but those lamentations from the mother, they pierced his soul, as if every cry was a reproach to him.

Humbly, timidly, and feeling a deep sense of unworthiness to pronounce with *his* lips that holy name he had often so vainly spoken---

Percy approached the stricken Maud as a comforter! and his words were now not those of empty eloquence, but they were *heartfelt*; he spoke of Him, who smites but in mercy---of the blessedness of their child---he even spoke of resignation! but he was startingly silenced---sent shrinking back within his own heart to search *there*, whether her bitter words were not *too true*!

“Resignation! yes,” Maud had exclaimed, her large distended eyes turning wildly upon him, “*you* can speak of resignation---*you* can uncomplainingly resign your child, the cherub whom you had cast off with his wretched mother---but *you* could not resign the sin which has brought this thing upon us.”

“Shall I give my first born for my transgression the fruits of my body, for the fruits of my soul?”

This was a bitter commentary wrung from a bleeding heart, and these words, uttered in the first hours of her dark grief—in those of

humbler resignation which followed, she had bewailed, and had supplicated on her knees pardon for her impotent harshness.

* * * * *

Maud never looked on the face of her dead child.

“I shall meet him soon,” she said, “where he will welcome me with a heavenly smile, and with his little arms stretched out to receive me. Let me not again behold him so cold and stiff, or in my despair, I may as before sin against my God—and we may never meet again in that ‘better land.’”

The remains of little Harry Percy were consigned to a grassy bed, in a little village burying ground in the neighbourhood, and though kindred hands be far away, his little grave is not left unadorned by those touching tributes of recollection which the kindly German people ever so religiously shew to the

memory of the departed, and this bright child long lived in the memories of many.

“ The brightest hued, most fragrant flowers,
Sweets to the passing sweet,”

bloom round the simple stone which marks, that beneath that spot there sleeps an *only child!* Harry Percy—the *sinless* Harry Percy!

Seated by the side of the grave, ere the grass had covered the little hillock, might often be seen a female form spreading flowers around it—sometimes she would weep, even though a placid smile was on her lips, but the tears seemed to bring relief—and she would talk, but with her eyes raised above—and she would listen, and her face would brighten as if she had heard some sweet answer—and she would tell those near her that little Harry Percy, for she no longer cursed that name, was with her murdered boy—that the blood of her Louis, (the name of her son had suddenly returned to her recollection,) was atoned for by the death of that spotless child—that she was now at peace

with all his murderers, and that the little angel who had brought all this to pass talked with her, and comforted her with descriptions of the bliss of her Louis.

The mind of the poor maniac never recovered its tone—but Mrs. Raymond is now calm, and her days pass peacefully, as they roll slowly towards the tomb.

CHAPTER XVI.

“ Must it be ? then farewell,
Thou who my woman's heart cherish'd so long.

* * * * *

Farewell again—and yet
Must it indeed be so ?”

BARRY CORNWALL.

It was a wretched time for the husband and wife when all was over, and they found themselves left together in that awful calm which succeeds the excitement of some severe affliction. They were together ! but how separate ! they could not weep on each others' bosoms,

they could not pray together, as once they had done ; it seemed as if some sudden gulph had opened between their hearts which both yearned to pass, but which neither had strength or courage to accomplish. The one had been too bruised, too crushed, for hope or energy ; and the other felt too strongly, shame and remorse from the consciousness of this merited alienation to hope for aught but coldness and repulse.

Sometimes a look, a tone of other days, and the divided hearts seemed about to burst the boundary, which now enclosed them ; but soon recollections, associations, would once more oppose, and they would again relapse into constraint and seeming coldness.

Maud--the faded, grief-stricken Maud, feebly entered one morning her husband's room with a letter in her hand. She approached him, and pronounced his name, he hastily averted his head with a shudder.

And why this shudder ? was it a presentiment of what was coming, or the tone of the

voice in which the word was spoken? That once loved name—uttered by a voice so changed, sweet, even tender, but oh, how altered in the expression of that tenderness.

“ I wish you to read this letter,” she then said after a moment’s pause, in order to gain his attention, with a sigh, at the same time removing her hand which she had lain upon his shoulder, “ for he shudders at my touch,” was the construction she put upon her husband’s movements.

Percy stretched out his hand for the letter without turning his head, and in its stead grasped the thin, cold hand that held it. A thrilling feeling passed through both their hearts, but at that moment Lotterchen entered and presented to her master, a note which had just been brought.

The eyes of both fell upon the direction, and with a shudder, Maud withdrew her hand, which was passively resigned, and turned away.

She heard not the indignant expression

“fool!” which her husband muttered between his closed teeth---nor saw the tearing of that billet into a thousand pieces without even looking at its contents. No, she had seen that hand writing once before, and it was graven on her memory as with lines of fire---was it not the writing of her who had lured him from her?

“Let him read it first,” she murmured as she sank upon a sofa and buried her face in the cushions, “it will better prepare him to consider the contents of the other.”

When Maud next stole a look towards her husband he was reading, but it was the letter she had dropped at his feet---the letter she had last received from her sister, offering her an asylum in her father's house.

Percy's head was averted, and so long did he continue with his eyes fixed upon it, that at length, again covering her eyes, she said,

“Well?”

“Well?” he repeated laying down the letter on the table.

She did not see with what a trembling hand, or with what a face of deep emotion. His voice indeed was so low, she could scarcely catch its tone.

“ Well, Maud, what do you propose?” A pause. “ You wish to go---” No answer came. “ Is it come to this? but of course. I have naught to say against it. Yes, your father’s house is now a fitter place for you---would to Heaven that *I*---wretch that I am---had never---”

“ Harry,” she gently and sadly interposed, “ self-reproach on that score is fruitless now---we both erred---and we have both been punished. God knows how *sorely* punished---if it were solely by the anguish of this moment.”

“ Maud---Maud, you will not then really leave me!” he burst forth in a passionate tone.

“ Harry!” she faintly answered, “ if I thought that my remaining would profit you either in soul or body, God knows! I would

no more leave you now, than when that letter first arrived, a month ago—though lonely and sad—I then still too fondly dreamt that your love was yet my own ; I fancied I was in some way necessary to your happiness, that I might eventually conduce to your eternal welfare---but—the dream is passed, what would it now avail?” she continued in a deeper, and more passionate tone, “ what would it now avail to remain a burden, a troublesome constraint to await the breaking of my heart, in a loveless, childless home ; to be tempted—perhaps again to sin in my despair, and murmur against my God, and loose my hopes of happiness in another world—for oh ! desolate, desolate will indeed be the burden of my weary song—and Harry, my heart has been so sorely wounded, I feel so crushed, so forsaken, that I require some tender hand to bind it up, to strengthen, and raise it from its despair, to turn it wholly to Him who has smitten it—now I am so weak,

that often I am tempted to think that my God has forsaken me; I cannot pray, I can do naught but groan," and she closed her eyes, as the tears forced themselves down her pallid cheeks.

"Sometimes in my sleep," Maud continued, "I dream that once more I am at my dear home; and then, such peace is in my soul, that I am with those who love me---yes, that they have forgiven me, that they love me again---that my father has blessed me---that the curse 'of him who curseth father and mother,' is removed, and they will bless me, they will receive her whose sins they see have been so sorely punished; and even should they spurn me, I could go and lie on my mother's grave, even there my soul would find rest---for she, oh she, has forgiven me---my mother---my mother!" she continued, lifting up her streaming eyes; "oh happy, happy to have been spared the grief of seeing the misery of the

child you so dearly loved," and she covered her face with her hand, her tears trickling through the transparent fingers.

Harry Percy sat, leaning his forehead on his hands, he felt every word enter like a dagger into his heart.

"And it is I who have brought all this upon her," he bitterly murmured, "and could I endure the sight of all this ruin even were I to detain her—no, it is best that she should go."

"Maud," he said at length in a hoarse, husky voice, "be it as you desire, you will go to those who will love and cherish you as you deserve; what right have I to strive to detain you, with me unworthy one; you have indeed suffered enough already from my selfishness, you shall do so no more; I will not speak of my own feelings; I have no right to expect that they should be considered; tell me what you wish should be done, and all shall be arranged."

Maud's hands were removed from before her

face, and ere she answered, she fixed one eager, searching look upon her husband, one answering glance might perhaps have been enough to shake her purpose, but his face was again hidden.

She continued in a voice of calmness, of utter misery---“ I mentioned to Lady Templeton the last time she was here that I had thoughts of visiting my family in England, and she proposed, if I would fix an early day, that I should accompany her, for she returns alone almost immediately, owing to the illness of her father ---it might then be as well---that I should accept her offer.”

Again she turned upon her husband, that same eager, gasping look; he merely bowed his head in sign of acquiescence, and then rising, murmured some unintelligible words, and left the room.

That same day Lady Templeton paid Mrs. Percy a visit. She had shewn her since the death of her child, kindness for which Maud could

not but feel grateful, though of that worldly nature, not greatly calculated to afford much healing balm to the wounded spirit.

“ I have seen Mr. Percy,” she said, “ and he agrees with me that your health and spirits greatly require the benefit and comfort of being with your family, from whom you have been so long parted ; and I am glad to say he has committed you to my care. The Duchess and her party intend prolonging their route homewards, but the critical state of my father’s health makes me desirous of losing no time in reaching England ; when there, I have promised Mr. Percy to see all arranged for your proceeding into Cumberland—if therefore,” and she fixed an early day, “ you think you will then feel strong enough to set off, I think it would be better that we should postpone it no further ; we will put poor Mr. Percy into good hands,” she continued with a smile, for the rigid calmness with which her auditor listened

to her cold arrangements, she mistook for composure, "and let me beg of you, dear Mrs. Percy, to spare yourself the agitation of a parting—they are dreadful things—even for the short time your separation of course will be," for Lady Templeton did not think it necessary that she should appear to put any construction on this separation, but in the light of a visit to her relations.

The tacit consent was given to this arrangement, and thus coldly was the time fixed which was to separate, by mutual consent, the two beings who had broken down every boundary of faith, honour, gratitude, and affection, to unite themselves with one another!

"And this was the end of love!"

Yes, and seldom is it otherwise with love built on the foundation of selfishness—on the ruins of the happiness of others. Seldom does it fail to fall at last—no even though it may rise from its unworthy foundation to the height

of beauty and purity, such as hers, whose sad story we are relating; but still that strengthened beauty cannot fortify the frail foundation upon which it was first based—the curse goes forth at the beginning, and cannot be gainsaid. Hearts that have erred must be brought at length down to the earth, though permitted, we may humbly hope, to be raised, cleansed and purified from all its earthly affections, mete for that better world, “love’s true abode.”

The day fixed for Lady Templeton’s departure rapidly approached. Silently, but no less surely, proceeded the preparations of her companion, but no further word relating to it passed the lips of those who were about to be parted.

Like two resigned criminals, who see approaching their day of execution, with no means or desire of averting their fate, they saw the time roll away which separated them from that day---and what would their parting be?

did they not shrink with inward horror at the thought of that moment?

It was hard to read the feelings of one of the two miserable beings upon that point. Cold, passionless as a marble statue did she outwardly appear to have become—unconsciously the time seemed to pass away. She gave no orders—expressed no sign of interest in any way, but sat or lay, as if in a dream, the picture of her child pressed to her bosom, watching the preparations which were to facilitate her departure—but the other, the observer might discern many signs there which betokened a mind ill at ease, that he was troubled by some dread anticipation.

Harry Percy had learnt to look upon their separation as inevitable, however agonising ; he felt that under existing circumstances it was even desirable ; but it was the moment's parting—the last adieu—the last embrace—the last meeting of each other's eyes, that he now shrank from with such dread—nay horror !”

It was to escape from this, that he was now exerting all his powers of imagination to arrange.

It was the last evening but one from the day fixed for Maud's departure, that he softly entered his wife's apartment—he had heard that she was sleeping, and found her lying on a couch near the window in the heavy slumber consequent on a wakeful feverish night---the setting sun of an April evening shedding on her cheek its roseate hue—that same picture tightly clasped to her bosom.

Percy gave one earnest look, and then bent down and softly kissed her lips; a flower was in her bosom; he gently removed it, and whilst he did so, he dropped a burning tear upon her brow. He drew hastily back, for she started, but it was but to murmur with a smile so strangely, sadly blissful on those wan features. "Harry—Harry—my own Harry!" and then she clasped the picture tightly to her breast.

“ It is of her child she dreams,” he bitterly thought, “ she will never smile on *me* again.”

He laid a letter by her side. It was his farewell. One more eager, agonised look, and quietly as he had entered, he quitted the room. Immediately afterwards, he left the house and returned no more !

Lucy entered the chamber of her mistress several times after Percy's departure, but still she slept. She marked the letter, and guessed pretty well its contents. She knew how it was, from a few words of earnest directions he had given her, and she thought it best, as it had been arranged. But at length when she once more entered the room, Mrs. Percy was no longer on the couch where she had left her, and on looking round, Lucy perceived in the dusk, a white figure lying on the ground, the hair streaming about her and writhing as if in agony.

Lucy sprung forward, and in terror raised her mistress from the ground ; in her hand was grasped convulsively her husband's

letter. She laid her on the bed, and then the agonised stifled cry of “Harry!” burst from her lips, and she lay repeating that name, till at length her voice died away in a low moan, and she relapsed into her former gloomy apathy.

The day for her departure came, and Lady Templeton bore back with her to her native land, where it had once blossomed with so bright and fair a promise—the faded, crushed, and tempest beaten flower.

CHAPTER XVII.

★
“ We have been sad together, we have wept with bitter tears
O'er the grass grown graves where slept the hope of many years,
The voices which are silent, would bid thee clear thy brow,
We have been sad together---oh! what should part us now?”

Mrs. NORTON.

WILL my readers now cast their eyes on a scene to which “long, long ago” we introduced them?—to the lake’s side at Sutherland—There on the very spot where on that fine Autumn evening Arthur Balfour first beheld her, May is again to be seen.

But is she not changed since those happy times?—yes her young heart was very light then for it was untouched by sorrow, and as unruffled as the clear smooth waters over which she bent—but grief has swept over and disturbed its surface, as the February wind now ruffles the tiny waves of that same calm lake. But still it is the same heart, chastened, but not cast down—strong even in its meekness, like the gentle flower, that bends its head beneath the blast, only to raise it again when the storm has past.

But her sorrows, what were they when compared to those of her once bright Summer sister?—True, she had seen the grave close over those she loved, but there were no bitter drops of self reproach to mingle with the tears she shed over them---and then to be all in all, to those that remained---never in agony to droop beneath the fever thirst of affection---ill requited love---despised and slighted affection.

No---May we can scarcely pity you, when

we think of poor Maud Percy, and all her woes ---for are there not many to soothe your sorrow by their affection?---why then do you look so troubled---and fix your eyes upon that letter you hold in your hand, and why one moment does your cheek burn, and the next you shake your head and weep? Is it not because you fear that your wound may have been healed *too soon*---that you feel your heart rebels not, as you deem it should, against the request contained in that letter---You will no longer keep back the legacy entrusted to you by one on his death bed---your heart, and the promise of your hand.

That letter was from the parents of her lost Percival---and they strove to remove all scruples from her mind, urging her to fulfil the wish of their lamented son---They pleaded for one, they loved for his own sake, and for that of him who was gone---and he would not---dared not sue for himself.

And indeed, though a week had elapsed since Arthur Balfour came to Sutherland, the bearer of the letter, he still feared all hearts espoused his cause, save *the one*---no word or look, from her, told him to hope.

And how he also stands by the lake's side, and thinks on that fair, gentle girl, whom once he met there---“the lily of the valley,” who first charmed him, but whose pale beauty he had slighted, for the proud rose that had so treacherously wounded him with its thorns--- Oh what misery might have been spared, had he been contented with the meek flower, for which he now pined in vain! He turns and sees through the leafless branches the same lily, but her brow is troubled, and she is apparently plunged in painful thought.

Arthur approached her---took her little hand, and now as once before, it trembled in his, and he only spoke the gentle words of a brother's love, and told her, he would ask from

her no more ; he would but crave that he might be to her again, what he once had been ---her friend in joy and sorrow---anything rather than be shunned---he almost feared---disliked !

“ Disliked ! oh ! Arthur.”

There was something in the tone of these few words which made his heart beat with renewed hope.

“ May,” he said, after a slight pause, “ say the word and it shall be done. If this ring,” and he pointed to the one placed on his finger by his dying friend, “ if it rests on your heart, as a weight—a hated bond ! say the word and it shall be once more yours ; he who gave it to me never intended it to destroy your happiness. The promise, therefore, may be cancelled. Tell me,” and his deep, expressive eyes seemed to pierce into the inmost recesses of her soul, “ let me hear from your own lips that you would be free, and then---”

“ Arthur!” she interposed, in a low, hurried, but firm tone, as she turned away her glowing face, “ cast the ring into those deep waters ---if you will---if *you* are weary of the tie that binds you to me, but never with my own hands, with my own lips, will *I* break the promise given to him, who is no more, whom I loved so well, and who is now raised far above my unworthy love: never will I attempt to dissever the bond, bound by his dying words, but if Arthur---”

“ My own beloved May,” he cried, “ what now shall part us?---Yes we shall indeed fulfil the wish of that blessed being, who even in death thought but of the happiness of those around him.”

“ And I will love you Arthur,” she said, “ with the chastened love of a heart which has been taught the danger of placing too great reliance on earthly happiness, remembering that those we love *may die!*”---and she

raised her earnest eyes to his face with all the love and respect due to a future husband, so good and noble. "If such love will suffice you, I am yours dear Arthur."

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ Life has been heavy on my head,
I came a stricken deer,
Bearing the heart, in crowds which bled
To bleed in stillness here.”

Mrs. HEMANS.

“ I saw him stand
Before the altar with a gentle bride,
Her face was fair, but not the one which made
The starlight of his boyhood.”

BYRON'S DREAM.

It was late on the night of the twenty ninth of April, that the inhabitants of a little roadside inn, a few miles from Sutherland Manor, were aroused from their sleep, by the arrival of

a post chaise, the occupants requiring accommodation for the night.

Two females in deep mourning, evidently a mistress and her maid, were the guests who demanded admission. They were shewn to the best bed-room the mansion afforded; but scarcely had the day-light dawned, when the hostess was summoned to the stranger's chamber, and requested by the lady, who the woman informed her husband, "seemed one more fit for Heaven than earth, so sad and spirit-like she looked," to send for the nearest medical man to see her maid who was very ill. "And true it was," the landlady added, "there lay the poor thing, groaning and looking as yellow as an orange. I told her that at eight o'clock I expected Mr. Mason to come and see our baby, so she said that would do; and then she asked me so sweetly what ailed the child, and when I told her it was a bad cough, she put her hand to her forehead and turning away, said as if to herself. "Then it was not a

dream," and after awhile exclaimed—"Take care of the child—oh! as you value your happiness, take care of it!" It strikes me she has lost a baby of her own, poor young thing! she spoke it so feeling like, and now I am to order the chaise round at half past seven, as she wished to go on a little further, and the maid is to be left behind, as I have promised to take care of her."

It was about eight, that same morning, the last of April.---A glorious spring morning it was, the soft air wafting on its wings the glistening vapour, the cuckoo commencing its unwearied notes, the streams gushing merrily and the early flowers opening their fragrant, leaves to the sun---all nature seemed rejoicing in the coming day!

A chaise slowly ascended the village hill---four years before, she who sat pale and motionless within it had traversed the same spot a joyful bride---she returns---a wife indeed---but alone!

The hamlet seemed astir with preparations as if in expectation of some coming event of joyful excitement---Garlands were suspended at every cottage door---the village children were busily employed in forming large nosegays---But the traveller remarked it not---her mind was wholly engrossed by powerful emotion---stretched far beyond the immediate presence of all outward objects, her distended eyes gazed with convulsive eagerness, but comprehended not what they beheld.

The grey tops of the ancient mansion rose before her, but the sight moved her not, for on that object her imagination had so long been fixed, that its actual appearance was scarcely more clearly distinct than had been the visions of her fancy.

The chaise turned at length from the high road down a flowery lane, and then she clasps her hands, and her head sinks upon her bosom ; when again it is raised, she sees on one side a parsonage of simple beauty, and on the other

---oh ! --- it was towards that object, she stretches out her arms, and gasps with an eager voice “ My Mother !”

It was a picturesque, ancient church---the grey towers rising amongst the trees, and the yews and cypresses waving among the tombs. The driver stopped for further directions---the wanderer alighted---he was signed to depart, and then she stood alone, and gazed wildly around her.

Her destination had been that little parsonage-house---her purpose to go to him---her tried and valued friend---but there steals over her heart a desolate, sinking despair---she feels as if returning, a stranger to her home---all would receive her with cold surprise, and crush still more her breaking heart !—More than ever she felt the blankness of being alone in the world ! cared for by none—forsaken—forgotten by all !

Through the church-yard she passed, and memory—meddling memory, was busy in her

mind, bringing forward with painful minuteness scenes of the past. She could almost fancy she heard the curse of the withered hag, whose hatred she had incurred, and felt the touch of those damp funereal flowers—the nuptial wreath, which had been cast at her feet on the day of her fatal marriage; and---distracting thought—where was he upon whose arm she then leant, with such confiding love--- who whispered words of tenderness --- was it through him that curse had been fulfilled---had *he* then proved the curse of her young life?

“ Could you see me now old Judith,” she murmured, “ your hatred would be fully satiated---‘ the proud have fallen !’ ”

But the poor wanderer had now entered within those sacred walls, and already the calm, holy stillness seemed to soften the bitterness of her soul, and with the devotion of a broken and contrite heart she knelt before the altar of God, and prayed. But when again she rose, her eager trembling steps turned with haste to

the chancel, where reposed the ashes of her ancestors in their tombs of gorgeous workmanship, and filled with many a coloured marble effigy of knight and haughty dame.

It was before a sculptured form of pure, spotless marble, showing like a lily amidst the time-stained monuments, that the drooping descendant of the Sutherlands, sank, and knelt, and gazed, with the look, which a mortal might fix upon a beloved form, come from another world with its long departed smile to cheer the fainting spirit.

“Lovely in perfect rest reclined,
As one beyond the storm.”

With arms crossed meekly on her breast and with the smile—yes, well the sculptor had caught that smile, with which she had blessed her children even in death—there lay the marble figure of her mother,

“In her love how sorrowfully true.”

and there now lies the child for whom that

love had proved too strong, who rests her weary head upon the bosom of the cold statue, and although it could do nought but cool her burning brow, although her arms encircle only a hard, stiff form which returns not her pressure—yet it seems peace to the worn-out heart of the exhausted Maud. She felt as if the blest spirit hovered around her—that it whispered to her soothing words of hope, of comfort. A smile stole over her wan features, and with the words, engraven in golden letters above her head, “I believe in the communion of saints,” trembling on her lips, the weary child sank to sleep as in days of yore she was wont to do, on her mother’s bosom, and through the emblazoned window, dimmed with armorial bearings, streamed the sun on those marble features, lending to them as it were a smile of life—the smile of a parent beaming on a long lost child.

Two hours of sleep—what ages of bliss to a grief-torn, weary soul! To be once more a

happy child, and dream that all her sorrow has been but a dark vision of sleep,—to be again the beloved of all---of her first---her early love, the noble and the good, and that it was but a dream, that she had forsaken him, and brought misery on herself—to stand by his side at the altar, not surrounded by grief and gloom, as when once she stood there, and plighted her faith to another, but with smiling, happy faces, with flowers beneath her feet, and songs and blessings sounding in her ear.

The sleeper wakes---but again she closes her eyes---It is hard to break the spell, and return from that world of sweet delusion---and though she sleeps not, there are still sounds in her ear, like those of which she had dreamt --- there was a song in those strains as if from an angel's voice,

“ They come, they come, oh ! bind them Lord
In bonds of steadfast love,
And part them, but to meet again
In happier worlds above.”

And then it seemed to die away, and leave unmixed the sound of footsteps echoing along the aisle, and then a murmur---a pause---a hush ---and then a solemn voice is heard clear and distinct, and fully awakened the dreamer to the consciousness, that she dreams no more, that all is reality.

The interior of the chancel situated to the right of the altar was partly hid from those who stood without by a light oaken partition of trellice work, which was now however but partly closed on the side which concealed the marble effigy of Mrs. Sutherland.

The sleeper had arisen and stood gazing with wild bewilderment on the change which the scene now presented.

Before, all was still and void of life, now the church is filled with human beings, the silent aisles lined with children dressed in white, their hands filled with flowers—but over this her eyes wander but for a moment; they fix their gaze on the altar where she had so lately

knelt in prayer, and since, in fancy, stood a bride! and there now stands one in bridal garments—so pure, so white! and bends her gentle head as the words of exhortation fall upon her ear, and echoes softly the low toned “I will,” of him who is by her side; and then the father performs his part—gives his child into the hands of another, and for the first time a sob is heard—the fair bride weeps! The father’s eyes overflow, but they are soothing, happy tears; did he know that his once most beloved, most valued child stands near him like an alien, unnoticed, and unknown, those tears of joy would have turned into bitter, scalding drops!

* * * * *

It was over, the quiet ceremony which united Arthur Balfour and May Sutherland---quiet, for save the humble guests who filled the church, and were alone to profit by the festive rejoicings usual on such occasions, it was but a little

group that stood with the bride and bridegroom around that altar; the father, and two fair little bridesmaids, the Ladies Balfour, and their sister Cecilia, she but the the bride of a month, with her young husband, Lord Henry Clifford, and Miss Meyer, the devoted friend, was also present at this agitating moment.

And now the young bride is pressed in her father's arms, and then in those of her husband, no new lover of a day, but one whom she had known in joy and in sorrow—to whom her young heart had been given in all its fresh unsullied purity, and for whom it seemed that Heaven had always destined her.

But why does the bridegroom suddenly stop, as he is leading his own, from the altar? he feels the light form press heavily on his arm—she was pale before, but now she is like death---she has fainted, and with an exclamation of consternation, he bears her into the air. May had glanced, silently invoking a blessing as she passed towards the spot where her mother's

remains were reposing, and it was after a startled, troubled gaze, that she had sunk silently upon her husband's arm, as if some sudden shock had levelled her to the earth.

But what matters this temporary gloom?---all visions save of happiness and love, will soon be chased from her mind—May is with the loving and the loved—but she who once was so prized—so cherished, is left alone, and desolate—to pour forth her tears and groans unheeded—to seek relief, but in that cold marble form on which she has again sank, pressing it in her arms as if to warm it into life and love. Calm and immoveable is the unhappy Maud—the sun-beams playing on all around, with the varied light caught from the coloured window, through which its streams glow brighter and brighter, as the day advances—there she lay, thinking whilst the power of recollection remained, that it would be the last day she should feel its rays. Complete exhaustion of mind and body had utterly

prostrated every faculty, and she imagined death was fast approaching.

It was between five and six o'clock in the afternoon, that the old sexton entered the church, to set all to right, and lock the church door. He passed along the aisle, bending his rheumatic back with many a growl of dissatisfaction, to collect the flowers now dead and crushed, that had been strewed before the wedding procession.

This employment brought him as far as the altar, and having carefully enclosed the ancient velvet hangings of the table in its holland coverings, he approached the chancel, as much the pride and admiration of his old heart as if it had been the relics of his own race, which were so highly honored.

He was about to close the partition, but gave one glance around, and for the first time, it was not the usual self satisfied smile, that this scene usually called forth upon his withered features.

With a surprised, startled, and somewhat alarmed expression, he peered forward, as he approached the spot where stood the last erected monument of the Sutherlands, but which was now partly concealed by the dark funereal form, whose head rested on the same marble pillow.

She did not sleep, nor had she fainted, for her large, lustrous eyes wandered over his face, without, however, seeming to comprehend what object they gazed upon.

The old man never remembered having seen but one such pair of eyes, and they belonged to one far away, in foreign parts, and whose bright face he could not associate with that faded countenance before him. A mysterious awe began to take possession of his heart, and after a long, nervous gaze, and a faint endeavour to address the recumbent figure before him, he let fall the basket of dead flowers he carried in his hand, and tottered away as fast as his old

legs could carry him, to seek some one to share his wonderment at this mysterious apparition.

Just as he issued from the churchyard, the tall, bent figure of a gentleman, unfastening the little gate of the Parsonage garden opposite, appeared in view.

On hearing his name called, he turned round, and listened to the sexton's communication, that a lady, all in black, was lying over Mrs. Sutherland's monument. He lost no time in following his informer to the spot indicated, bent over that dark recumbent form, and without an exclamation—too deep was his astonishment and emotion for speech—he raised the poor wanderer at once in his arms. And she knew him—yes, she smiled, and laid her head on his bosom, and tears which seemed again to open the current of suspended feeling in her heart, rolled heavily down her pallid cheek. Mr. Merton bore her to his home, and revived

by restoratives, and still more by affection, poured like oil upon a wound, he learnt at length from her lips, the sad eventful history of the circumstances under which he now beheld her.

CHAPTER XIX.

Am I so changed? and yet we two
Oft hand in hand have played.
This brow hath been all bathed in dew,
From wreaths which thou hast made.

MRS. HEMANS.

And on my bier I'll lay
Me down in frozen beauty, pale and wan,
Martyr of love to man,
And like a broken flower, gently decay.

Barry Cornwall.

IN the *boudoir* of the late Mrs. Sutherland, the young bride was reclining on a sofa. The expression of her glowing countenance was happy, though somewhat languid, as she lis-

tened to her husband, who murmured softly in her ear—

“Then, you are now, dearest, well and strong enough to depart, and I may order the carriage?”

“Yes, dear Arthur; I am ready, and only ashamed of my unaccountable weakness; it is so unusual for me to faint; but send dear papa to me, I wish we could take him with us, or that we could have persuaded him to go to Howard Castle with the Cliffords, for I fear he will be very lonely when we are gone.”

“Dear May, it will be but for two or three days; you must not grudge me so short a time of your undivided company.”

“I must not mention to my father,” continued May, “the foolish fancy, which even now I cannot banish from my imagination.”

“My darling May, I must not allow you to dwell upon the subject,” interrupted Arthur.

“But, Arthur,” interrupted the young bride,

in a low voice, as she hid her face on his bosom, "it was not *her* face, not my dear mother's, which it seemed to me that I beheld—it was as the ghost of Maud's."

Arthur was silent for a few moments—the shadow of some long conquered emotion seemed to pass over his countenance—but soon he pressed his fair wife to his heart, soothed her with words of affection, and then gently disengaging himself from her arms, he kissed her brow, and left the room to give orders for their departure.

May remained alone in the soft twilight, but only for a moment, for just as a calm and serious expression of thought was stealing over her countenance, she was startled by a voice from without the window. It was Mr. Merton's, and she prepared to receive him with a smile of welcome.

He appeared—but not alone—by his side stood a dark figure, who, after one hurried glance within, glided on before her companion

and stood opposite May, who had risen from the sofa, and fixed a bewildered gaze on the form before her.

“ She does not know me,” cried the stranger in a low voice of subdued anguish, sinking on her knees at her feet, “ she does not know me !”

“ Mand, my sister—my own dear sister !” exclaimed the astonished May, and she was raised once more in a sister’s arms—her face bathed with a sister’s tears.

Mr. Merton had hurried on to prepare *another* for so agitating—so unexpected a meeting ; but he had missed him, and when he again entered the room, the father was pressing the long severed child to his heart, and shedding tears of mingled emotion over her, who “ was lost and was found.”

And Arthur, when he saw the poor, blighted flower, withered even through him who had torn it from the parent soil, he wept with them all over the still fair wreck, as exhausted by

the violence of her emotion, she now lay before them, unconscious of the love and tears poured upon her.

May spent her bridal night in watching over the sister thus strangely and suddenly restored to her—often, as during the fitful intervals of slumber, she drew aside the curtain, and gazed upon the poor sufferer's countenance ; she had to ask herself whether it was the same being who had once occupied that very same apartment—that bright, joyous being, who ever awakened with a smile upon her radiant face, to join in the pleasures of the day—many were the bitter tears that were shed beside the restored sister.

Indeed Sutherland Manor was again a house of mourning, for all who beheld the change that four years had wrought upon the beautiful Maud were deeply affected.

Mr. Sutherland could not bear the sight—it was torture to his soul—he dared not look upon his faded, sinking child—his conscience accused

him of neglect towards her—the agony of his sorrow—of his self-reproach, was pitiable to behold. He heard from Mr. Merton the brief sketch which Maud had given him, concerning herself, but in which they saw plainly every circumstance relating to her husband had been softened. They now anxiously awaited the arrival of Lucy, for whom a carriage and an attendant had been despatched to convey her to the Manor. From her much information was expected.

The old house-keeper, Mrs. Power's feelings were all merged in grief and indignation. To think that her dear young lady—the darling child of the mother, who was gone, should return in such a state to her father's house. Her anger was vehemently excited against poor Lucy. To think of her never having given a hint of the real state of affairs—little did the inhabitants of Sutherland Manor guess, the conflicts and struggles this attached creature had encountered, with a degree of unselfishness,

with fidelity, beautiful to reflect upon, she had clung to the desolate fortunes of her young mistress, shared with her cheerfully every hardship, partook largely of her sorrow, and with uncomplaining fortitude, even submitted to the hardest of all trials, that of never divulging to her friends in England the real state of her mistress. Maud, tenacious to the last of her husband's credit, had drawn from poor Lucy a solemn promise of secrecy, and she had kept it, alas ! but too well.

The startling truth burst upon their perception with agonizing force. That she must be changed —and that her lot was not a happy one they could have imagined, but they had not anticipated this fearful, total change!

On hearing of the death of the poor child, they had determined immediately after May's marriage to go to Germany, in order that the sisters, at least, might meet. Little indeed could they have believed that four years had worked such fearful ravages on a heart, whose

peculiar depth of feeling, they had never guessed to be possessed by the wayward, spoiled child of other days. It was a restless night that first which Maud passed on her return to her home. She spoke little, but in the intervals of short slumbers, troubled and feverish, disturbed by incoherent words and starts, and sighs of pain, she lay, her sister's hand locked in hers, replying to the endearing words of those who hung around her bed, by a wan smile, and looks of perplexed, though affectionate gratitude. Once when May bent over her to kiss her, Maud passed her fingers fondly through one of the silken ringlets which had escaped its fastening, and fell upon her shoulder, and she said in a low voice—

“ May did *he* give you the lock I sent to you?”

May could only murmur, “ Yes!” for the suddenness of the question affected her so powerfully that she burst into tears.

“ Was it not beautiful,” she continued with

a smile brightening her wan features, "and now how far more beautiful, they wave over his head like little angels. Ah!" and an expression of acute pain again obscured the smile, "I had forgotten, he is an angel," and she buried her head in the bed clothes.

May took from her bosom a little locket in which she had placed the hair of her beautiful boy with that of her sister, and when she could command her voice she said, as she laid it before Maud,

"I have prized this very much, my darling sister; you know not how much. When you are stronger and better," May continued, "we will talk together of the angel who is now with his Saviour, and with the loved ones who have gone before us, and where we humbly hope we shall see him, ere long, still more beautiful—more blessed than he was on earth."

"Yes—yes," faintly gasped poor Maud, her sister's words causing tears to roll down her cheeks, "he is with his Saviour—with our

mother, May—how blest indeed, sweet spirit—how dare I wish him here. But, May, you know not what he was to me—my all—of joy—you cannot know—and, but that I feel I shall very soon be with him—behold him—I could not bear it as I do now—but *his* God, is *my* God.”

Maud again covered her face, and spoke no more.

Just before sunrise, May, who had been lying down by her sister's side, and was rejoicing at witnessing a more quiet and refreshing sleep, saw Maud suddenly awake—her eyes wandered around her, as if to ascertain where she was, and who was with her; and then she lay for some moments in silence.

“ Ah, how strange it all seems,” she at length exclaimed, “ just as if it were a dream, that I had ever left you, but a long, long dream, dear May,” and then after a pause she asked for her father.

“ He has just left the room, dearest Maud,” her sister replied, “ he has been in and out every half hour during the night, though he feared to disturb you by shewing himself—and Arthur too,” she added in a lower tone.

“ Ah! dear Arthur,” interrupted Maud, “ does he not hate me for coming thus to disturb all your happiness?”

“ Dear Maud,” exclaimed May embracing her.

“ But,” continued Maud after a pause, “ is not this May-day—ah, yes, I must see the May-day sun rise once more over beautiful Sutherland, as we always used to do; pray let me, dear May?”

Supported by her sister, for on arising, she was herself startled by her extreme weakness, she was soon standing by the window, gazing on the distant mountains, from which the sun was rising in all its glory, tinging with its gorgeous hues the surrounding sky.

May opened the window, and Maud seemed to drink in with gasping avidity the sweet fresh air.

“ My home, my own loved home !” she fervently exclaimed.

A moment after there was a murmuring and rustling below, and the next there arose a suppressed chaunt, which grew louder and bolder as it proceeded, and they perceived a party of children with garlands of flowers.

They were the children of the school, who still continued the custom which had been usual since the sisters' childhood, of greeting them at the rising of the May-day sun, with a song, and offering of a wreath of flowers; and now, hearing that their dear Miss Sutherland, or rather Mrs. Balfour Sutherland, had not departed the preceding night, and that Mrs. Percy had returned, they thought it more necessary than ever that a bride should not lose her accustomed honors; and though they had heard it rumoured that the bright creature

whom they remembered delighting them with her beautiful smile, as well as frightening them with her large fierce eyes when they were naughty, and who at length had proved naughty herself, and had been held up as an example of filial disobedience, had returned ill and unhappy—yet they thought perchance, their song might please her, who naughty or not, they always remembered with affection and admiration; so they ventured to make the attempt—but when after suffering them to proceed for a few moments, May turned to look upon her sister's face, all traces of any thing like enjoyment had vanished, leaving naught but deeply rooted sorrow and suffering.

May signed to the children to stop, and Maud, suffering her again to lead her back to her bed, murmured in a low, hollow voice,

“No that will not do for me, dear sister—my spring time is over, with its songs and flowers—there is no May for me.”

* * * * *

Poor Lucy arrived that day. She was greatly changed, what with her illness, her long journey added to the distress of mind the attached creature had suffered, and as she sat in the housekeeper's room relating to her aunt with many tears, her tale of woe, which Mrs. Power never rested till she had drawn from her, no one would have recognised the smart, bright eyed abigail, who had so gaily chatted in that same room four years before ; but still there was comfort for her, an approving conscience, she had done her duty nobly as a christian servant. And also, she found an old lover faithful, though raised lately, by the sudden death of Williams, to the exalted station of house steward, and who, far from lamenting her change of appearance, congratulated her "that foreign parts had worked no greater harm."

The emotions excited in every breast by the return of our poor heroine, were less vividly felt by herself than others. Her feelings were

paralysed, too much bowed down by suffering for aught to have the power, after the first excitement was over, to affect her much. Even her meeting with Arthur was calmly gone through. He, with deep emotion seized, the hand, which with a wan, but affectionate smile she stretched towards him, pressed it to his lips, and was too much overcome for speech ; but Maud calmly spoke, (oh how that voice, that changed—but still musical voice, once so beloved, thrilled upon his heart, like a song of other days !)

“ Dear Arthur, how I thank you for this kind reception ; I who have come just in time to disturb you in the midst of your happiness—but I must be no longer in your way—you must take May away as you intended, for a few days. I shall welcome you gladly back—but you must let it be as I say—and now,” and she flung herself into her father’s arms as he sat beside her, and pressed her with fervent love to his bosom, “ my father will have his other

child to keep him company, and kind Miss Meyer will help to take care of me."

And so it was finally arranged—late that evening the newly married pair quitted the Manor leaving together the father and the long parted daughter in the quiet solitary mansion.

It was an affecting sight—the father seeming as if he would fain atone to his child for past neglect, by every mark of tenderness—he never left her side, watching her every movement, every look, with nervous, painful eagerness. Sometimes it was difficult to realize to his mind that it was his proudly, blooming Maud, by whose side he sat, and walked, when occasionally she was drawn along the gardens in a chair, or when he supported her weak steps along the sunny terrace.

How all this recalled to his mind that dear departed one whom he was sometimes tempted to fancy was again the object of his care. But between them there was one great distinction—never on the countenance of his wife had he

been pained by witnessing those harrowing signs of mental suffering which all his tenderness could not banish from the expression of his poor child's features.

Never but in her first conversation with Mr. Merton had Maud spoken of her husband—and now to her father she was equally silent concerning him. Whatever thoughts and intentions were working in Mr. Sutherland's heart relative to that subject, he never breathed his name—he felt that it was too painful and agitating to both, and one of which he could not speak, but in terms which it must wound her heart to hear—and he was right—for why did Maud recoil from speaking that once loved name—was it that she might endeavour to hate it—forget it. Ah no! or why in the dark hours of night, when others slept, was that name gasped with bitter, scalding tears, or why was the image of him to whom it belonged brought vividly before her, by all the strength of yearning, agonised affection—and a strife,

she once thought had ceased, with departed hope, shook, day by day, more fiercely her fragile form, bringing her nearer and nearer to the grave.

No, her silence was but the shrinking fear of exposing that name, treasured yet so tenderly, to the breath of odium, and reproach—and there it lay unspoken—burning at her heart.

The first advice that could be obtained was eagerly procured for Maud—but alas! the opinions of the medical men were more startling than even the fears of Mr. Sutherland had suggested—and when after three or four days' absence, May and Arthur returned—it was to a house of sorrow and dismay. The physicians had pronounced that the invalid was sinking, from a rapid decline.

“There has been evidently,” was the remark of the clear sighted, experienced practitioner, who had attended the late Mrs. Sutherland, “a slow poison working here, more detrimen-

tal to her constitution than the tendency to her mother's complaint, which under different circumstances might never have been called forth—a long continued wear and tear of the nerves and spirits, which the violent agitation and affliction, you tell me she has lately undergone, has now brought to a fearful crisis, this seems to me," the doctor remarked to Captain Balfour Sutherland in a private conference, "quite a case of which we often read, but seldom recognise in these our days—that of a broken heart—there is much to answer for in some quarter! Is there anything at present particularly weighing on her mind, if so, it should be immediately relieved, for without mental alleviation, nothing can be done for the body."

Three weeks had passed since the patient's arrival before that question was answered.

There had been no intercourse between Maud and her husband since she had left him; with the exception of a few lines, which Lucy, according to her master's desire, had written to acquaint him with their safe arrival in

Cumberland. She had informed Mrs. Percy of this, at the time of writing, in order that she might add any message from her—but Maud had merely turned away her head, and wept.

One day she had seemed stronger and better, and had been walking slowly with long intervals of rest, leaning on Arthur's arm along the picture gallery, the scene of many a happy hour, during the winter they had assembled together. She passed also into the saloon, and gazed upon the portrait of their childhood, and then she made his heart beat sadly, by approaching gradually to the events of later years, and at length spoke with affecting contrition of her own conduct towards him—and then of her joy, that thus, in the sequel, he had been a gainer by it, in possessing such a treasure, as her sister. Suddenly she had broken off, and spoke in agitated terms of her love—her undying love to him to whom she had united her fate—and just as she reached her room, and he was about to leave

her—she turned towards him, seized his hand, and fixing her eyes wildly on his face, murmured in a low, passionate tone of entreaty.

“ Arthur—generous noble Arthur—you will not let them reproach me—you will not let them refuse me what I am about to supplicate. I *pine* to see him once more—the father of my angel. I have not long to live, and if they would have me die in peace, with no earthly longing to keep my heart from God—let him be sent for—let me see his face—let me hear his voice—once more ?”

Arthur pressed her hand—and in a voice choked by emotion, said—

“ It shall be done, dear—dear Maud—trust to me, it *shall* be done.”

“ God for ever bless you, Arthur,” she faintly answered.

Another request she made that evening.

“ May,” she whispered. “ I have a wish—Will you grant it ?”

“ Dear Maud, why ask such a question ?”

“ I am not worthy of the privilege—but that room—that bed---there I would go---there I would die.”

Her desire was fulfilled, and to her mother's apartment she was the next day removed, and took possession of the bed on which she died ---from that bed she rarely rose again, for though since her conversation with Arthur, a weight of painful care seemed to be removed from her mind, and each succeeding day found her increasing in holy faith, and spiritual strength, the powers of body seemed to wax weaker and weaker, and though sometimes a bright, unearthly bloom, which flushed her cheek, gave false hope to those around her---she knew that *her days were numbered*.

CHAPTER XX.

“ What angel shall
Bless this unworthy husband ? he cannot thrive,
Unless her prayers, whom Heaven delights to hear
And loves to grant, reprieve him from the wrath
Of greatest justice.”

SHAKSPEARE.

BUT what has become of Harry Percy all this time ?---After parting with his wretched wife, he had thrown himself into the first public carriage he met, hardly conscious of its destination---only anxious to escape from a place,

which would now have been insupportable, and found himself, not many hours afterwards, at Strasburgh ; there he entered an hotel, and rejecting, to the surprise of the landlord, all offers of *patés de foie gras*, ordered a bed. The next morning found him in a state of illness, as much mental as bodily.

There he lay for a week tended only by strangers, listening to no sounds but those of the eternal cathedral chimes---and the terrible voice of conscience, speaking loud within him. Truly Harry Percy was in a miserable state---and when he reluctantly arose from a bed of sickness, and went forth into that gloomiest of German cities, to wander in the awful stillness of the noble cathedral, the gloom of its walls suited the sombre colouring of his feelings.

He felt that he was a wretch ; he had become despicable in his own sight, sensible that all good men had reason to hate him. Conscience bringing to remembrance the reckless tenor of his past life, held his sins before his view

with this fearful inscription written upon them, "God will bring every work into judgment." Hence the haggard look, the restless couch---days never free from bitterness---and nights given up to remorse. He was a solitary being on the face of the earth; the two treasures he had once possessed and prized in all their value when it was too late, were lost to him. Yes, distracting thoughts--- the cherub child he had loved so well---stricken, perhaps for his father's sin, gone down into the dark, cold grave---never to be beheld again by him---for could he hope ever to be admitted, where the spirit of one so pure had flown? And she, the angelic wife who had blessed his home---the blessing he had despised and slighted---she who in sorrow or in joy---in spite of bitter neglect and wrong, had been so good and kind, had endured till she could endure no more! She was gone, to be taught no doubt to hate him, to forget him! But he deserved it all---he had cast aside his salvation; his day of grace

had passed—she who was to have been his redeeming angel, had forsaken him—what could he hope for now ?

In the midst of all this excitement, Harry Percy, with the enthusiasm with which he entered into every pursuit, spent much of his time, in eagerly devouring the contents of his bible, a book, which though it may seem strange, he was in the constant habit of reading—but those passages of mercy, which formerly he had laid hold of as “flattering unction to his soul”—salve to the wounds of conscience, appeared now to his eyes, opening to the just view of his guilt, as threatenings of wrath and judgment !

“What might have been the consequence if he had remained thus alone at Strasbourg we know not---but remembering that the time had nearly arrived, when he might expect the letter informing him of Maud’s arrival at Sutherland Manor —— he suddenly set off as

fast as *diligences* could convey him, across the country for Ostend, where he had ordered the letter to be directed.

He had fixed on that place, anxious to be within a few hours' passage of England ; and he had also determined upon abandoning Germany *coute qui coute*—a country which had proved so fatal to him, and had now become odious to every feeling of his soul. Percy's desire was intense, to escape from any further participation in an affair, which in his now altered and repugnant feelings, he only looked upon with horror and supreme disgust.

Concerning this subject a few words of explanation are necessary.

During Percy's residence in Germany the *chateau* of the Countess had been one of his principal resorts ; and gaming constantly went forward within its walls.

The company chiefly consisted of foreigners of distinction, who, in her husband's absence,

this lady always collected around her, and Percy's handsome person and fascinating demeanour had early inspired the Countess with a passion, ardent as it was unprincipled.

It is a revolting task to broach a subject, which like pitch can scarcely be touched without defilement---Percy, miserable and deluded man, to what had he come at last?

True he trembled at the view of the gulph which opened before him, but the vice which had through life been his stumbling block, hurried him on to destruction. Large sums were forced upon him by the infatuated woman, and his necessities were too urgent, for these repugnant favors to be rejected---he hated himself, when, with a blush of burning shame, he accepted these wages of iniquity, but he had not strength of mind to break the chains of vice, which entwine round the victim those concealed fetters, by which at last he is completely bound---and thus had passed the last winter.

But it had happened, that the Jewish Count had suddenly returned from Poland, and almost immediately, Percy received a letter from the fair Countess, hinting the prudence of his keeping away for some little time, which Harry interpreted into the probability of her lord's having been somewhat startled, at finding the enormous drains, which had been made upon his purse during his absence---And this had happened at a moment, when Percy was in the most pressing need of money, and calculating upon a fresh attack upon those resources.

Vice brings a man under a slavish dependence on external circumstances—it renders him abject — cowardly --- in short a slave —— having once allowed passion to gain the ascendant, he has thrown himself into a torrent, and though he may faintly struggle, the stream bears him along—he does not go, but he is driven forward, agitated and impelled — passive, like a ship, to the violence of the waves!

Percy had arrived that night at home---What a contrast to his sight, his gentle---wronged---drooping wife, opposed to the glare---the unloveliness---the baseness of the things for which he had so cruelly neglected her---it seemed suddenly to burst forth before his perception, like the sun, showing every object in its true light, making all their deformity most conspicuous !

There were germs of good still remaining in the Gambler's heart---chords, vibrating to tender feelings yet unbroken. With all his faults he loved his wife, fondly, though scarcely he revered her perfections. At this moment he felt a desire---nay, a determination, more sincere than the evanescent fancies which had often before assailed him, to atone to her for the past, by a new life---a relinquishment of every folly!--and with real earnestness---and without concealment, he had conversed with her on their future plans, and determined to

abstain from the ruinous, sinful means upon which he had before solely relied.

Unfortunate Percy!—why then had he at this hour of grace—when love, and peace, were beginning once more to smile upon him—why had he so unworthily deceived her—why did he abandon his poor Maud in the manner which has before been detailed?

Yes, he had abandoned her—deceived her—for the reason he had given for his departure had been entirely fabricated.

The truth was, that the letter calling Percy away, had been from the Countess, informing him of the sudden departure of her husband. She was in the deepest distress, imagining that she had offended him, and with passionate eagerness, implored him to come in order to meet a numerous party she had formed entirely on his account. The Countess added that a large sum, which she had inveigled from her indulgent husband was at his disposal; the

delight of his society being only too great a repayment for money which was perfectly useless to herself.

What an ordeal for Harry Percy ! He had not a sovereign at that moment at his disposal—he was completely without resources. The only means he had of commencing the course of amendment he proposed, was in laying hold, in some way or another, of a sum of money—for it was very fine talking—but how could he in his present moneyless state, leave the country, and set off for any other abode—save indeed a prison ?

“ Ye must not do evil that good may come.”

Did these words ring upon his ears---at any rate he shut out their warning sound.

To go then to the Countess, and bring back to his wife and child, a sum, which would be far more worthily disposed of, than remaining in the possession of that worthless woman, was but an act of wisdom---and necessity.

The slavery of vice—the chains which clung around him, impeding every advance which he feebly made towards virtue — his hopes and fears—all hanging upon the world—the abject dependance under which he had been brought, by fortune—violent passions—pernicious habits—now exercised their direful dominion over him and forged the links, with which he was bound—and Harry Percy sold himself to do iniquity.

But it must all be concealed from Maud—he knew too well that a prison — beggary would, to her eyes, be happiness, compared to such means of escape. Her mind had long since revolted from even the most distant intercourse with one, whose principles she had learnt to condemn—and she had extracted from her husband a solemn promise to break through the intimacy.

Whether she had relied upon that promise, or whether her fears and suspicions had been excited, Harry had never given himself much

trouble to ascertain ; but now it was his most anxious determination that she should never again be pained by distress on that score—once out of the present difficulty, and supplied with a sum of money, he vowed to forsake, for the future, every pursuit that she could condemn.

Thus quieting his conscience, Percy had left his unsuspecting, almost happy wife, and hurried once more from the atmosphere of purity into the foul precincts of vice—and then—retribution had tracked the steps of the misguided man.

The task which he now imposed upon himself was repugnant—dreadful to his altered feelings. There was a fierce struggle working within him, between good and evil—it was therefore with the utmost difficulty that he endeavoured to play his part—that he uttered words, which his heart rejected with loathing.

The Countess, with the quick perception of

an impassioned woman, was not slow to perceive symptoms of coldness in his constrained manner---and it was at this moment when he was vainly striving to quiet her jealous suspicions, he had been overheard by the agonised Maud---then followed the wretched sequel !

* * * * *

For Ostend Harry Percy departed changed both in heart and person. He was a wan shadow of his former self; sickness of body, and agony of mind, had wrought indeed their work of devastation.

He found the expected letter---with what avidity it was torn open---not so much from anxiety to ascertain the safe arrival of his wife---of that he had little doubt---but in reality, with the secret hope of finding in it, some expression of re-awakened affection, perhaps repentant sorrow for having left him---and the

impossibility she felt of existing without him——perhaps a supplication that she might return——but no——not a word---not a message---merely the few coldly respectful matter-of-fact lines from Lucy, with the information that Mrs. Percy had arrived at Sutherland Manor, on the day of Miss Sutherland's marriage with Captain Balfour. She feared her lady was not stronger than when she left Baden, but it seemed a comfort to her to be surrounded by her family.

“Comfort ! yes !” he bitterly exclaimed, “Yes, surrounded by the friends who hate her husband, she will soon learn no doubt to lament the waste of years of happiness she has spent with him---she will learn not only to live, but to be happy without him,” and he excited himself into the idea that he was the aggrieved person---and the miserable man would stand and strain his eyes after the retreating Packets, repenting that he had not braved all, the chance of arrest---every consideration ! and set

off to England to claim her---in spite of all opposition.

Ostend was beginning to fill with vi-itors, who resort thither for the bathing season——Percy kept himself as much out of the way as possible, dreading the idea of meeting any chance acquaintance——and a very old one it was his fate to encounter, though to his relief he was not recognised.

He ventured once to watch the disembarking of some passengers from England. Among them he noted a family composed of a fine looking man---a lady who, though she had lost the first bloom of early youth, was still very handsome, and whose joyous countenance shewed that the cares of life sat lightly on her. They were accompanied by four or five children.

The plain travelling carriage, the quiet, comfortable air of the retinue altogether, shewed that they belonged to that happiest class of the English——middle life——neither burdened by

the restraint of poverty—nor the constraint of grandeur and pomp, generally imposed on rank. How happy they all looked !---the children so amused, so joyous---the husband and wife equally so---probably delighted at leaving behind them the gaiety of London, for the uncontrolled liberty of a foreign tour, with plenty of money to spend. And in the happy wife, who merely noticed the distinguished form, though haggard countenance, of the fascinating Harry Percy, by a careless glance and the passing thought “Of whom does that man remind me?” he recognised no other, than the cruel, prudent Julia Bernard---who had refused to marry him because he was a Gambler !---and although on that cruel prudence, he had often cast the blame of his past blighted career, he now with bitter feelings acknowledged the wisdom of the decision. The poor Maud! he thought with repentant sorrow — would that she had been equally wise!—his conscience

might then have been spared at least the sin of her misery !

Harry Percy was however not long in retaining his *incognito*. Some acquaintances arriving at Ostend, found him out, and to his dismay, his solitary apartment was invaded. They rallied him on having turned recluse—and *malgré bon gré* drew him off to the billiard room — and languidly without the least particle of his usual *enjouement*, he was forced to play. If billiards could not make Harry Percy himself again, they imagined they knew what must revive him—and cards and dice were made ready for his evening's entertainment.

The first night he escaped and went to bed—the second, smitten with a desire of banishing his unbearable depression by his usual means of excitement—he seized the dice box and——The Gambler's heart turned sick—his hand trembled.

No more astonished might have been the guests of Macbeth at the unaccountable agitation he manifested at the banquet scene than were Harry Percy's friends at the emotion they now witnessed in him this night. And still more were they astounded, when finally, finding it impossible to proceed, he dashed the dice box upon the table, and muttering some incoherent words—arose and hurried from the room. Locking the door of his apartment, and throwing himself on the sofa, he gave himself up to all the wretchedness of his feelings.

What was to become of him now—where betake himself? Even the pleasures of sin had turned against him—by no virtuous struggle with his passions had they been overcome; but suddenly when too late to be of use—when all were now gone, without recal, they too had deserted him, and the exciting cup had changed into a loathsome, bitter draught, whose property consisted only of the fearful power of

conjuring up ghosts of the past, maddening to his senses, as the spectres of the murdered victims of the Thane of Cawder.

All his buried hopes—all his lost blessings—the dread arrear of the past! why had they waited till now to rise up before him with such awakened horror? And that bright and beautiful child with its waving hair, why appear before his mind's eye, with the smile on his lips with which he had bid him adieu for the last time—or worse—as he saw him next, “with that waving hair at rest!” and the awful smile on those stiff, cold lips—And she too—why did she come also to trouble his soul, not with the stern look of one who had forsaken him—who now hated him---but as a pale, weeping ghost—lamenting not the health—the happiness she had lost, but that by his *sin* they had been parted—yes parted for eternity! “Maud, Maud,” he cried in violent excitement, “take me back—take back your unworthy husband—he has

learnt at length to value you—he cannot exist without you—without you he is lost for ever ! Did you not love him, with a love too firm to be wrenched from him thus completely?---do I not see you in my dreams stretching out your arms, and imploring me to fly to you?”

Wretched man ! his sin had found him out !

Almost frantic, Percy seized a pen and wrote to his wife ; he had often done so before, but in his cooler moments the letters had been destroyed, and this one was not either destined to be dispatched.

The next morning Percy awoke in a high fever, and for many days was confined to his bed---the most part of the time half delirious. When sufficiently recovered he was permitted by his friends, two of whom had kindly remained with him, to read the letters which had arrived during his illness.

There was one which he instantly recognized as the hand-writing of Mr. Merton. He tore it open with frantic haste, cast his eyes over its

contents, uttered an exclamation of dismay and anguish, and then informed his friends, who were tempted to believe that he was still suffering from delirium, of his intention to proceed immediately to England.

“ Will that not be a dangerous hazard ?” one of them ventured to remark, when they saw he was perfectly determined to set off.

What mattered it to him how dangerous—even if destruction were to be the consequence, the delay of an hour longer, should not intervene before he quitted Ostend ; his wife was ill—and had sent for him ; was not that reason sufficient ?

The friends shrugged their shoulders, and gave up disputing the point—only hinting the expediency of his taking some precautions ; such as an assumed name—some concealment of his person, but Percy, absorbed in his distracting thoughts, heeded them not.

By the next packet, the two friends embarked with Percy, for Dover.

"Percy have you heard that Jack Drummond is dead?" said one of them, as they paced the confined deck.

"Dead!" was the abrupt answer.

"Yes he died quite suddenly the other day--- I wonder who will be fortunate enough to get hold of his money; he has not I believe a near relation in the world---Percy, you used to be a bosom friend of his—so who knows?"

"Pshaw!" muttered Percy between his teeth ---"a warm friend indeed he proved himself to be."

"Oh! well, it was deuced close of him, we all thought, never to have come forward with the least offer of assistance; but it is the way of the world---a man will do anything in the way of friendship, but put his hands into his pocket, however brim full it may be—but come my good fellow, for goodness sake, let's have a hand at *ecarté*, it will cheer you up."

Percy gave his officious friend a glance of fierceness, which, embodied in words, might

have expressed an ardent desire to hurl him overboard. Pushing his hat over his brow, he turned away, and stood straining his eyes over the sea, till the white cliffs of Dover appeared in sight.

CHAPTER XXI.

“ Hushed were HER lips ! but still their bland
And beautiful expression seem'd to melt
With love that could not die ! and still his hand
She presses to the heart no more—that felt.
Ah, heart ! where once each fond affection dwelt,
And features yet that spoke a soul more fair,
Mute, gazing, agonising as he knelt,—
Of them that stood encircling his despair,
He heard some friendly words ; but knew not what they were.”

GERTRUDE OF WYOMING.

It had been a bright and glorious day of early June—Maud was reclining on her couch, the drowsy hum of Summer sounds floating around her ; her eyes were fixed upon the white, fleecy

clouds sailing along the blue sky, and a Heavenly smile was on her lips,—as if she communed with things invisible.

Her anxious friends rejoiced to see her thus, for during the last few days there had been about her a nervous excitement, and the consciousness of its existence seemed to distress her.

Often had she started up—clasped her thin hands, with glistening eyes, and flushing cheeks, when some distant sound, or voice, had fallen upon her; and then she would exclaim in a sorrowful tone, as her hope vanished, and she sunk exhausted, even by this temporary excitement—

“It is wrong to love him still so very much.”

On this day, there seemed no power in outward circumstances to disturb her tranquil, upraised spirit.

Towards evening she requested May to raise her on her pillows, that she might see the sun set, and as she did so, Maud whispered gently,

with something like her bright, gay smile of old,

“I think he will come to night!”—and soon after she bade her tell Arthur to come and sit with them—her father and Mr. Merton were already there.

When May returned with her husband—Maud took both their hands, and looking affectionately into their faces, said—

“I love so much to see you together—and to think of all the happiness of your future years. Has not our God been good and wise?—has He not made all things to work together for good?—yes all—can we now discern in any of the dispensations with which He has pleased to visit us ought but mercies—“mercies in disguise.” And then with the clear sighted perception, which those, approaching the confines of another world, seem sometimes so peculiarly gifted—and with an affecting eloquence, which caused those around almost to hold their breath with awed attention,

she traced every past event of Providence, and how they all had marked the wisdom and the compassion of a merciful Father.

“For myself,” she said, “I needed all that I have suffered to humble my proud heart—I wept many a bitter tear---I mourned through many an hour of sorrow---but the trial was from God---and by His goodness those tears of sorrow have been converted into tears of joy---and my unhappiness has been the means of winning me to Him. And my mother---my sainted mother---she was taken from evil to come---before misfortune gathered round those she so fondly loved---her gentle spirit ill could have brooked the agony, my sad career would have inflicted on her tender heart---her life was one of pious happiness---and she exchanged it, we humbly hope, for a world of eternal bliss.

“And my child,” Maud continued after a pause, which was unbroken by the weeping group—“My pretty Harry! oh! the blessedness of the thought, that he is safe—my little

lamb—safe in the Heavenly fold—sorrow will never bow his head—nor sin deface his soul—safe from the temptation of the world. His sweet face is hidden from me for a little moment, but soon it will bless my longing sight, I shall see him far more bright—more beautiful—more happy than he was wont to be here below.”

And then she spoke of her husband, as she had done so much of late—no breath of reproach or blame had she to fear from any one—too much were her feelings respected—too much awed were they by witnessing the enduring—the beautiful power of an affection, which seemed almost to sanctify, in their eyes, the object on which it was poured—and could he, who had preserved such a love, be so utterly unworthy---impossible! “And you will not,” Maud continued, cast him forth again on the bitter, dangerous world---you will protect him---assist him by your love and kindness?---oh! if not for my sake---for his own---for the sake of an immortal soul, you will save him

from having again recourse to the world of which you know not all the dangerous wickedness. Believe me---he naturally loves all that is good and lovely---he will but too willingly forsake the life he has hitherto led, if you once more stretch out your arms to receive my poor Harry---yes," she said, with a happy smile--- "I have a sweet hope that my prayers are at length about to be answered, and that the curse of disobedience which I have brought not only myself, but on all connected with me, will be done away; and though, I shall not be permitted in this world to see the fruits of my prayers for him, they will be granted when I am gone---and therefore it is that I so long, I trust it is not sinful so to do---to see him once more; for though I can safely confide all into the hands of my God, yet I know, that words from dying lips are often permitted to have blessed effects on those to whom they are addressed---and I would tell him, that though in a moment of despair---of wretchedness---I forsook him, that

he is my last earthly thought---that cares for him will haunt me even to the gates of death, and disturb my dying moments---if, with his own lips, he does not confirm the hope of our final re-union---the blessed trust that we *all* shall one day meet together,

“ No wanderer lost, a family in Heaven.”

The shades of evening were gradually closing round them, and when she had finished speaking, she lay calmly and silently with her hand clasped in her father's, from whose eyes many a burning drop was falling.

All was hushed within that chamber, the silence only broken by the unequal breathing of the invalid, and now and then a suppressed sob from her sister, as she sat leaning her head against her husband's shoulder.

A physician was in attendance in the house—and once Lucy entered and whispered to May that he wished to know if he might enter, as he usually did at that time, to see his patient—but Maud answered a glance which

her sister cast towards her, with an imploring look which seemed to say, "Let me not be disturbed just now." So May shook her head, and Lucy departed, having first approached the bed-side to receive a pressure of the hand and to hear the anxiously whispered words, "Do you think he will come to night?" and all again relapsed into their former quiet.

At length the breathing of Maud became deeper, and they knew that she was sleeping.

No lights were brought, though it was becoming quite dark, and the bright evening star alone shone in upon them --- and there sat the sad party—Mr. Merton even fearing to arouse the sleeper by rising to depart.

Suddenly their attention was aroused by a sound which became by degrees distinct from that of the mountain streams, with which at first they had confounded it. It was the noise of carriage wheels, fast approaching the house. Their hearts beat quick—and May murmured in

a breathless voice, "'Tis him," Mr. Sutherland, pale as ashes, motioned to Mr. Merton, who gently left the room. But whether it was the sound that had aroused her, or that even in sleep, her fancy was busy with expectation, Maud started up, and gazing with bewildered eagerness around her, cried—

"Who is here—I heard—I heard a sound—is he here?—I dreamt—I dreamt—that he was here. Father, is it you?—May—Arthur? oh, tell me—is he come, don't deceive me?"

"Dear Maud, Mr. Merton has gone to see, you must compose yourself, for we may be mistaken," they said.

"No, no, it is him—I hear his voice—I am sure I hear it. Let him come to me—do not let them keep him from me."

Arthur knowing that all this agitation must be more hurtful than the meeting, hastened to ascertain if it were really her husband, and to bring him to her; on entering the hall, he found in truth Harry Percy, leaning for sup-

port on Mr. Merton's arm, though by the light of the lamp, he beheld a face so ghastly, that at first he could scarcely recognise him.

Percy was eagerly, but in a voice hardly audible from agitation, interrogating Mr. Merton; but on seeing Arthur, who extended to him his hand, he seized it earnestly with strong emotion.

He was immediately told that Maud knew of his arrival, therefore he had better go to her.

"Where is she---where is she?" Percy wildly enquired.

He had reached the anti-room, and there stood Mrs. Power with a light in her hand; the glance she cast upon him as he rushed past her, had in it more of reproach than pity, as also the tone of voice in which she said, "You must take care, sir, she must not be agitated." But he heard nothing, saw nothing till he had passed through the chamber door, and then the sweet words, "Harry, Harry, is it really my Harry," reached his ear, and in another instant

he held Maud locked in his arms, weeping over her---sobbing like a child.

If on the first sight of the man, they could not but associate in their minds, as the being who had destroyed that sweet flower before them, the feelings of the father and sister had been chilled towards him ; such a sight had, in the next moment, melted their hearts, and they too were weeping.

At length Maud released her arms from about her husband's neck, and then they looked upon each others' faces with a long, earnest gaze.

Candles had been brought in, and as their light shone upon him---

" My poor---poor Harry," Maud faintly murmured, as she looked upon the pale, haggard being before her.

But Percy saw but a face of unearthly beauty, cheeks flushed with such lustrous brilliance, and a smile of such angelic happiness,

beaming from her sparkling eyes, that he exclaimed in a low, passionate tone---

“ My own darling, they told me you were so ill---that you were dying, my angel. It is not true, you will not leave me---you are too good and beautiful to die.”

She shook her head with a sad, sweet smile.

“ ‘Then Maud,’ he exclaimed, with passionate vehemence, “ I am a murderer---if you die, I call heaven to witness, it is I, who have killed you---I who have broken your angel heart---yes,” and he turned wildly towards May and her father. “ Curse me, spurn me, I am the wretch who has destroyed her---well may you execrate my name.”

“ Harry---Harry, do not talk so wildly---you distress me. It was not you, but God, who has laid my proud spirit low, that he may exalt me to his kingdom, and there, through the merits of His Son, I am, I hope, fast hastening. Father---May---speak to him, soothe him, tell

him that you forgive him, as you have forgiven me."

Mr. Sutherland took his hand, and implored him to be calm for the sake of her whom they both loved so well.

"Yes," Maud continued, "my father will forgive us, will bless us—and May—let me see my sister in your arms. And now I am happy, you will all love one another when I am gone; and now my own dear father, my darling May, kiss me, and leave us together, for I must lose no time, and I have much---so very much to say."

The husband and wife were left alone.

For some time after, nothing was heard in the silent chamber but the low murmuring of Harry Percy's voice, as with Maud strained to his bosom, in broken accents he poured forth heart-rending words of agonised affection, and of bitter, vehement, self-reproach, till at length the torrent of emotion had exhausted itself. There had been a pause, and then those who

waited in the adjoining apartment heard another voice break the silence, at first it was scarcely audible, but soon it rose clearer and louder, and never were the tones of that sweet voice forgotten by those upon whose ears they fell ; and though at times the breathless listeners turned their eyes upon each other as if to say, "should this be suffered to continue?" all around seemed to shrink from breaking in upon that solemn communing.

Later and later it grew, and still those words flowed uninterrupted from those same dear lips, for he to whom they were addressed, had now no eager vows, no passionate protestations to meet the solemn exhortation. In humble, broken-hearted contrition he gazed on the angelic countenance, and drank in the eloquent words by which, as with an angel's voice, she besought him to flee from sin and follow God---but suddenly the listener's attention was turned into another channel, there was a total pause, an ominous stillness.

Mr. Merton and Arthur proceeded to the chamber--- May and her father remaining motionless, with swelling hearts. The next instant Arthur returned, and in a choaked voice murmured, "Come."

As they entered the apartment a deep, smothered groan met their ears, not from the dying wife, but the wretched husband, in whose arms she was so peacefully reclining ; a sweet smile gleaming upon her face even through the shades of death, which were so fast gathering round her.

The father and sister each took a cold, damp hand, which closed upon theirs with so thrilling a pressure !

Mr. Merton said the prayer for a departing spirit, and ere the words had died upon his lips there was a gentle sigh.

* * * * *

They removed the wife from her husband's arms, he passively resigned her---the faithful spirit had departed !

* * * * *

It was a strange coincidence that the same bright sun, which a week after mocked with its brightness the misery of the mourners, in the noble chancel of the Sutherland's, shone also on the humble group which surrounded the grave of the old beldame Judith. On the same day, the once bright child of prosperity, was laid in the home appointed for all living. The wretched woman, an object of contempt and disgust, was likewise committed to the dust.

Once more Sutherland Manor was left to the solemn stillness which succeeds the departure of the dead. That same evening Mr. Merton was summoned to the apartment now occupied by the widowed Harry Percy.

He was seated, leaning his head on his hands, but raising his head, as the clergyman approached, he placed in his hand an open letter.

"The contents of this you will be so good as to communicate to Mr. Sutherland."

Percy proceeded to say---"You see that he

will now be released from the generous offer, which I so little merit, I mean that of assisting in the arduous task of arranging my affairs."

Mr. Merton cast his eyes over the letter, which to his great surprise acquainted him that by the will of his deceased friend Sir John Drummond, Harry Percy became possessed of more than half of his large fortune.

"This," Percy continued in the same calm, apathetic tone, affording a strange contrast to the energetic enunciation, with which he would have formerly discussed so fortunate an event, "for this I am thankful, as it will remove the necessity of taxing Mr. Sutherland's kindness; and it will also enable me to satisfy every claim, and to remain in my own country. It is my intention to leave this place to-morrow for London, in order to settle my affairs, after which I shall be able to form some plan for the future. You will, therefore, my dear sir, be so kind as to acquaint my friends with this sudden determination. It must be a relief to them

all, for what can my presence be but a source of agony, and bitter associations. Bid them, for me, adieu---thank them all for the kindness and forbearance they have shown towards me--kindness of which I am so utterly unworthy. Tell them, at this moment, my heart is too broken by sorrow and remorse to profit by any sympathy. If we meet again, I may perchance be more fit to receive it."

Harry Percy persisted in this intention--and seeing no one but Lucy---departed on the following morning from the spot where he had caused so many tears to flow.

It was deemed a sacred duty, by those who had witnessed the anxiety of the departed Maud, for the welfare of her husband, to endeavour, in every way, to promote it.

Arthur Balfour, a few days after his departure, followed him to London, with kind messages from Mr. Sutherland, and anxious enquiries concerning his future plans---inviting him to join their party in a journey abroad, for

the benefit of his own, and his daughter's health and spirits, which had greatly suffered from the late mournful event ; or if he preferred the solitude of the Manor, it was at his disposal. But both the propositions were gratefully declined. Solitude and perfect seclusion were now his only desire---the only remedy which he felt would be the least salutary to his mind---but not at the Manor could he seek refuge---he had not strength to face the agonising associations of that place. Finding that they could be in no way of use to the unhappy man, the Sutherland family left England.

In a short time, all Percy's debts and liabilities were paid off, and a moderate, unincumbered income remained at his disposal.

Not a few hearts beat gladly at the prospect of Harry Percy, a widower with improved means, making again his appearance in the world, of which he had always been so great a favourite, as well as ornament ; but all were disappointed.

The first year of widowed had even passed, but no Harry Percy graced the clubs or the racing stands—or the drawing-rooms of the bright and beautiful.

What had become of him? Conjecture exhausted itself in surmises—till at length, the fate of all, whose friends are of the world---few ceased to care, and he was forgotten.

CHAPTER XXII.

" I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
 Long since. With many an arrow deep infix'd
 My panting side was charg'd, when I withdrew
 To " " - - distant shades.
 There was I found by one, who had himself
 Been hurt by the archers. In his side he bore,
 And in his hands and feet, the cruel scars.
 With gentle force soliciting the darts
 He drew them forth, and heal'd and bade me live.
 Since then, with few associates - " " "
 " - - " " I wander far from those
 My former partners of the peopled scene,
 * * * * *
 With other views of men and manners now
 Than once, and others of a life to come."

COWPER

ONE evening in the autumn, five years after
 the events related, a gentleman and lady were
 returning from a ramble on the hills surround-

ing a retired and beautiful little seaside town, in the west of England. They were touring in that part of the country for the benefit of the health of a child.

But not the bright-eyed creature who is carried in her father's arms, her cheeks colored with all the fresh brilliancy of health. Suddenly, as they were passing before a building in the irregular, unostentatious street, the child placed her little finger on her lips, and whispered, "Hush!" and pausing, the deep toned voices of a congregation, joining in a solemn hymn, met their ears.

When the sounds had ceased, they enquired of a person who stood near, what was the nature of the meeting?

They were told that it was a congregation of Plymouth Brethren, who had assembled on this particular occasion in order to hear a distinguished preacher, who was to discourse that evening.

Of this sect the travellers had heard much

during their sojourn in Devonshire ; and the lady now proposed to her husband that they should enter, and listen to the preaching ; and the little girl with all the curiosity of her sex, to see all that is to be seen, seconded her mother's desire, by pushing aside, with her little hand, some one who stood in her way, and expressing a very decided determination to go in, and see where the pretty music came from ; so the ladies having gained their point, the little party entered.

They found themselves in a long, lighted room, filled with people, whose eyes were all eagerly strained towards the upper end, where stood the preacher, supported on either side by a party of assisting brethren, who with their bibles in their hands, their eyes now bent to the ground with an air of proud humility, now stealing a glance over the congregation, as if to observe the effect which the emphatic eloquence of their zealous brother, produced on those who heard him.

It was perhaps with no little exultation that their eyes fell upon one face bathed in a flood of tears, and evidently suffering from strong emotion, one to whom their zealous perception could plainly discern was not *of them though amongst them---a daughter of the world*—and though shortly after, she was drawn away by her husband, the brethren probably breathed a prayer that the sword of the spirit might have pierced the heart, and that the seed sown that day might take root, and bear fruit upwards.

But the worthy man would have been disappointed had they known the real origin of the emotion of their fair convert, for though in calmer moments, the sacred subject set forth with such affecting, and heart-stirring power, would not have been without its effect upon her heart—it was not the discourse which now moved her, but the strange and unexpected identity of the preacher before them, which had caused a rush of sad memories to rise before her mind.

And that sudden pause in the before eloquent and fluent harangue of their much prized holy brother, what would they have thought, had they known that the sight of a little, uncovered head, upon which waved curls of golden hue, and two dark, lustrous eyes fixed wonderingly upon him by that child, held in her father's arms, had for an instant been able to shake his soul, and turn it back to earthly remembrances, even from the spiritual exaltation in which it had been, ere now, solely absorbed—and that his mind too was wandering back to past days—to the “Gambler's wife.”

But it was over—the momentary feeling passed.—again he raised his head, pushed back the dark hair from his intellectual brow; his eyes flashed brightly with holy fire, his form dilated, his arms were raised with enthusiastic eagerness, and with the inspired tongue of an apostle he exalted the name of Him, who had called him out of darkness into marvellous

light, and by whom, with all believers, he was justified from all those things which in times past he had walked.

Yes, with May and Arthur we may again recognise Harry Percy ; no longer the enthusiastic, inveterate gambler, the eager worldling ; but the zealous disciple of Him, whom by his works he had before blasphemed. No longer the much prized companion of the followers of the world, but forming a distinguished member of an isolated company of men, who, however blameable, may be the ill directed zeal which turns them away from the bosom of that church so wise and scriptural in its doctrines, are still, not only in faith, but in practice, the faithful upholders of Him, towards whom the world is ever in enmity.

Harry Percy, broken in spirit and in health, torn with the pangs of remorse and anguish at the death of a wife, loved by him through all his frailties with an affection sincere and tender,

had buried himself in seclusion, after the arrangement of his affairs, and the liquidation of his debts. He had accidentally fallen in with a member of this religious sect, a man of talent and powers of intellect well calculated to exert an influence over his mind in its peculiar state. It is not therefore surprising that, with all the enthusiastic impulse of his nature, he had seized with avidity the gospel truths of which their doctrine is principally composed, namely, justification by faith, and a total exemption thereby from every past sin, and that he had rushed into the arms held out so eagerly to receive him, as a member of the community. Those who have ever been thrown into the way of this sect are probably aware, that amongst its most pious and zealous members, there are many who, formerly, like Harry Percy have been wedded to the world—its sins and pleasures.

The next morning Percy received an affec-

tionate note from his sister-in-law, proposing to visit him with her husband.

The bearer of the epistle was the little Maud Sutherland, who they were informed by the nurse had spent some time alone with her uncle—and when he had taken leave of her, the description of the warm embrace—the gushing tears—and the fervent blessing he invoked upon the little girl, deeply affected the parents. It proved that Harry Percy, changed though he was, still preserved that warmth of heart, that kindliness of feeling, which even whilst pursuing his career of worthlessness—were charms irresistible, in their fascination. How beatified were these qualities now !

May's affectionate nature yearned towards him whom she now only remembered as the adored husband of her dear, departed sister—and who, however she might deplore the ill-devoted channel of his present, altered career, could only now excite her admiration, and afford her consolation on his behalf.

It was wonderful to hear, as she now did, that Harry Percy, once absorbed in all the exciting pursuits of sins and pleasure, was wholly devoted, heart and soul, to the service of his God, and the welfare of his fellow creatures. Whilst his own wants and mode of living were condensed into the simplicity and self-denial of an anchorite, his income was spent in affording relief to the poor and needy—his hand ever ready to smooth the dying pillow—his words of comfort raising many a fainting heart.

However painful the interview might be, May earnestly desired to see Harry Percy, but this was not to be.

With all the energy of his former style he wrote gratefully and affectionately, but declined the meeting. He was on the eve, he said, of setting out on an expedition which deeply involved the interest of his Master's kingdom—for the due preparation of such an undertaking, he required every power and affection of his soul,

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